



THE INDEPENDENT

No 3,666

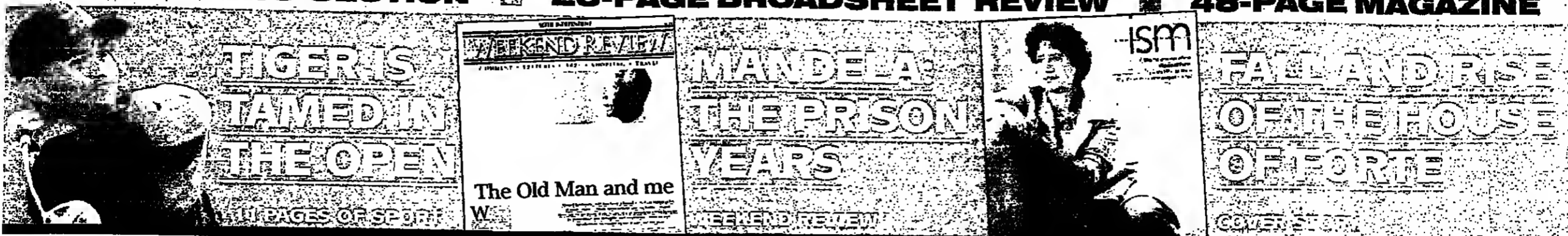
SATURDAY 18 JULY 1998

(TR70P) 70p

28-PAGE NEWS SECTION

28-PAGE BROADSHEET REVIEW

48-PAGE MAGAZINE



Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, bows to the late Tsar



The final bow: Boris Yeltsin and his wife pay their respects to the mortal remains of His Imperial Highness, Nicholas II, Tsar of All The Russias. Full story page 13

Associated Press

Lawrence verdict: police were racist

THE CHAIRMAN of the public inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence is understood to have reached the conclusion that the police investigation of his death was riddled with racism.

Sources close to the inquiry say that four months of evidence about the attempts to bring Stephen's killers to justice have exposed a culture of institutional racism within the Metropolitan Police as well as bigoted behaviour by individual officers.

BY KATHY MARES

The first part of the inquiry, a scrutiny of the aftermath of Britain's most notorious race murder, will end on Monday in Elephant and Castle, south London. The second part, to begin this autumn, will examine the lessons to be learnt for the investigation and prosecution of racially-motivated crime.

Sir William Macpherson's report - expected to be the most important document on race relations since the Scarman Report 17 years ago - will not be ready until the end of the year.

But sources say it is certain to be scathing in its criticism of detectives who worked on the Lawrence case. It will also express dismay at the level of police incompetence.

The conclusion that racism tainted and undermined the murder investigation will send shockwaves through the force, Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner, pledged to eradicate racism from the Met in a keynote speech soon after he was appointed in 1993.

INSIDE
The imprisoned man overshadowing the case, page 10
I feel so sorry for the killers of my son, page 10
How the police murdered justice, page 11

The inquiry team will probably stop short of singling Sir Paul out for criticism. Sir William is understood to take the view that he is better left in place to deal with the fall-out from the report.

The team is likely to conclude that the huck stops with former deputy assistant commissioner David Osland, who was in charge of policing in south-east London at the time

that Stephen was stabbed by a white gang. Mr Osland commissioned a now discredited internal review of the investigation. He also suggested last year that police officers should sue the Lawrences for accusing them of racism.

Sir William and his advisers believe that, at a subconscious level at the very least, detectives failed to investigate the murder with vigour because Stephen was black.

They may decide that certain officers were guilty of racism in the way that they dealt with the Lawrence family and with Duwayne Brooks, the principal witness.

Members of the inquiry team believe that the incompetence and racism laid bare in one division of the Metropolitan Police must be mirrored in police forces around the country.

They consider that they have a rare opportunity to make a significant contribution to racial harmony. "If we are not radical in our recommendations, people will want their

mooney back," said one source. Sir William and his advisers are said to be horrified by the complacency of high-ranking officers. "The organisation did not appear perturbed, except in terms of its public image, about the way that the case was handled," said the source.

All but one of the senior officers involved in the case are retired, immune from disciplinary action, their pensions secure. However, Sir Paul may not survive the inevitable calls for his head to roll.

Brown tells Murdoch the euro is coming

GORDON BROWN defiantly reasserted the Government's policy on the single currency yesterday at a meeting of Rupert Murdoch and his News Corporation executives.

Just weeks after the Sun newspaper labelled Tony Blair "the most dangerous man in Britain" because of the Government's stance on monetary union, the Chancellor said that it was vital for the country to keep its options open on whether or not to join.

"To rule out monetary union in principle, and to be prepared to do so even if the economic benefits were overwhelming, is not the right way to advance the British national interest," he

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Sun Valley

said. "This is our policy and it will not change."

He was speaking to the three-yearly retreat held by the Murdoch businesses at Sun Valley, an American ski resort in the far north-west, a venue that Mr Blair used three years ago to woo Mr Murdoch and convert him to Labour before the 1997 election. But where Mr Blair was at pains to underline the points which he held in common with Mr Murdoch, Mr Brown chose the occasion to reassert one of the key points of difference between Downing Street and both Mr Murdoch

and his newspapers. All of Mr Murdoch's British titles oppose membership of monetary union, which will start next January. Mr Brown emphasised that Britain would not be pushed back into the margins of Europe. "Rather than standing on the sidelines as happened under the last government... the new Labour Government will be engaged and constructive in setting out our ideas for the future."

Mr Brown flew to Sun Valley, at government expense. He had declined Mr Murdoch's offer to pay for the flights, a government spokesman said. The Sun Valley King, page 7

Government to force drivers off the roads

THE GOVERNMENT wants to cut the number of journeys made by motorists by a tenth through a raft of "congestion charges" and taxes.

The drive to force people to use public transport more to unclog city streets will be confirmed in the Transport White Paper, published on Monday. Measures such as taxes on workplace parking will be announced alongside promises to improve bus, rail and tram links.

The Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, will say that the aim of the move is to "transfer" one in ten journeys made by car onto public transport. The White Paper will also see the creation of a Commis-

BY RANDEEP RAMESH
Transport Correspondent

sion for Integrated Transport which will ensure that the combination of public transport links and taxes is successful in reducing car use. Any measures that do not work will be discarded.

Mr Prescott, who has a responsibility for transport, won a major victory over the Treasury in being allowed to keep the cash raised and believes that the new car taxes will garner £3bn for public transport schemes by 2005.

Allowing councils to charge motorists, for driving into and through busy town centres for

example, will require legislation, and the new charges will be introduced in key pilot areas by 2000. By the middle of the next century, however, local authorities will be raising £1bn a year from the taxes.

With the technology for electronic road tolling still years away, the most effective measure of limiting traffic growth in rush hour is to tax the country's six million off-street, non-residential parking spaces.

Treasury sources say that companies will face a charge of £150 a year but there will be exceptions for rural firms, council car parks, hospitals and also for supermarkets, who might otherwise go out of business.

Britain hails its own teenage golfing sensation

FORGET TIGER Woods, Britain has its own golfing phenomenon. Justin Rose, a 17-year-old from Hampshire who could not collect the £300,000 first prize were he to win the Open Championship tomorrow, upstaged the world No 1 with one of the best rounds ever by an amateur in the world's oldest tournament.

Rose, who scored a four-

BY ANDREW FARRELL
at Royal Birkdale

under-par 66 to equal the record score for an amateur previously matched by Woods himself two years ago, coped with the high winds at Royal Birkdale better than any of the professionals.

His two-under-par total after 36 holes left the South African-

born player one shot behind the little-known leader Brian Watts, of America, but seven strokes ahead of Britain's finest ever golfer, and three-time Open champion, Nick Faldo. Woods, the 22-year-old who has set records both on the course and off with his \$100m in endorsements, lost his lead by dropping four shots in the first nine

holes. Rose, playing in his first Open, was watched by members from his club, North Hants, and his parents, Ken and Annie, who wore roses in their hats, a tradition started when their 14-year-old son became the youngest player in Final Qualifying three years ago.

"It was surreal watching your kid up there with the likes

of Tiger and Nick Price," said Ken Rose. The family left Johannesburg when Rose was five years old.

He has been playing golf full-time for over a year after leaving school at 16 with eight GCSEs.

The Open has been won by an amateur only six times in its 127-year history. This will al-

most certainly be Rose's only chance to add to the list. "I have been tempted into turning professional but I haven't made a final decision," he said. "I was going to use this week as a guide. If I win, then, yes, I could be tempted."

Amateur's golden day, Sport page 28

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The cost of blood to the NHS is to double following moves to treat all donated blood against CJD.

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POLITICS

Pensioners will receive a guaranteed minimum weekly income of £75.

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FOREIGN NEWS

The US Supreme Court ruled that Bill Clinton's bodyguards must testify in the Lewinsky case.

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BUSINESS

A former director disciplined by the City regulator called for a review of Itruro's procedures.

PAGE 15

SPORT

Michael Schumacher has extended his contact with Ferrari until 2002.

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Cycle Jordan
From Amman to Aqaba
In aid of the National Deaf Children's Society.
The National Deaf Children's Society is looking for adventurous people to join us for the trip of a lifetime, cycling 350km through the historic land of Jordan. Taking in the fabulous sights of the ancient city of Petra, the Dead Sea and the Red Sea, you can experience this most fascinating of places on a bike!
By taking part in this fantastic fundraising event you are not only guaranteed an adventure of a lifetime but will also raise vital funds for the National Deaf Children's Society. Interested? Call for your free information pack today!
Call: 0990 222 511 (24hr)
or fax: 0171 251 5020
e-mail: ndcs@ndcs.org.uk
or write to: NDCS 15 Dufferin St. London, EC1Y 8PD
All riders must be over 18, pay an initial deposit of £250 and pledge to raise the minimum amount of sponsorship.
Cycle Jordan is an Adventure Sports promotion of NDCC Ltd.
Reg Charity no 104552

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HOME NEWS

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Squaddies ran drug ring

A drugs trial which has badly damaged the reputation of one of Britain's most famous regiments was drawn to a close yesterday. Operation Cruiser, involved the smuggling into Britain of up to £12m of heroin, ecstasy, amphetamines and cocaine by soldiers and former servicemen with the 39th Regiment Royal Artillery.

Page 4

Blair flies in to rally Scotland

Tony Blair flew north yesterday to try to staunch the haemorrhaging of Labour support to the Nationalists and in effect begin the fight for control of the Scottish Parliament. Scotland was facing a choice of two futures, the Prime Minister said - a new partnership with the rest of Britain, based on prosperity, a better health service, more jobs and good schools; or separatism with a party that wanted to "wrench Scotland out of the United Kingdom".

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FOREIGN NEWS

PAGES 12-14

Assad comes to Paris

When the guests rose to the music of Chopin, a Syrian woman in her white scarf at the front of the great Salle des Fêtes began a high scream of greeting to President Hafez el-Assad. Her ululations took the security men off guard. So, too, did the Arab chorus that followed, echoing down the escalier d'honneur where the Garde Républicaine stood to attention, swords drawn.

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SPORTS NEWS

PAGES 18-28

Cipollini triumphs again

The Italian cycle-sprint specialist, Mario Cipollini, yesterday won his second successive stage of the Tour de France, making a late surge to win the 204.5-km sixth leg.

WEEKEND REVIEW

28-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

Paul Valéry

George Carey is, when dealing with individuals, a man of pastoral breadth and more liberal than supposed.

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Howard Jacobson

It never was going to happen to us. We do not have their luck. The luck of the French.

Page 5

David Thompson

There is plenty of talent in America, but is there one director there unmistakably possessed by greatness?

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Cryptic crossword, Weekend Review, back page

CJD risk doubles cost of blood

THE COST of blood to National Health Service hospitals is set to double following the Government's decision yesterday to order the treatment of all donated blood to reduce the theoretical risk of transmission of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Hospitals use about 2.5 million units of blood each year and pay the National Blood Authority about £36 a unit to cover the cost of collecting and processing it. The Government announced that all blood will have to go through leucodepletion - a filtering process to remove the white blood cells which are be-

lieved to harbour the infective agent. It follows advice from the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (Seac), set up to monitor the risks relating to BSE and CJD.

Estimates of the cost of the process range from £50-£70m a year by the Department of Health to £80m by the National Blood Authority. A spokeswoman for the authority said on the basis of the higher figure it would add about £30 to the cost of each unit making a total

of £85. "That is about twice the present cost," she said.

The extra cost will be borne by the Government for the first year, but will be paid by NHS trusts out of their budget allocations in succeeding years. The spokeswoman stressed that no profit was made out of blood and it was "all NHS money".

The blood authority is already spending millions of pounds to protect patients from blood contaminated with HIV and hepatitis, but new viruses are continually being discovered that pose a theoretical risk of infection. Senior figures in the

health department have questioned whether spending sums of this size to reduce a very small risk is warranted rather than accepting the risk and paying compensation to people adversely affected.

Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, said yesterday: "Although the risks are still theoretical, it is better to be safe than sorry." Dr Jeremy Metters, the deputy chief medical officer, stressed that the move was a "purely precautionary measure".

The new process of leucodepletion, which is also used

in France and Austria, is to be introduced gradually over several months to ensure blood supplies are not disrupted.

Dr Metters added: "An adequate supply of blood remains essential for the work of the NHS. It is, therefore, more important than ever that blood donors continue to come forward to give blood regularly, as we need more of it to treat more patients in the NHS."

A health department spokesman dismissed warnings from one scientist that as many as one in 125 patients having a blood transfusion might be

in danger of infection with CJD. "That is assuming that five different variables line up in a certain way. It is pure speculation - grabbing figures out of the air."

The Government acted in February to reduce the risk from blood products by banning the use of UK plasma in their manufacture. The plasma is now imported from abroad. The risk of transmission of CJD in that case, although still theoretical, was higher because thousands of donations are pooled to produce the plasma and it takes only one infected donation to contaminate the batch.



Heather Jansch with two driftwood sculptures from her exhibition at Saltram House, Plymouth

Susannah Binney

Monopoly plays games with the North

BY LUCIE MORRIS

GOODBYE PICCADILLY, farewell - Leicester Square. Monopoly is looking beyond London.

The property game that has kept families competing - and arguing - for more than 60 years is to have new versions based on four other British cities. Hasbro, the owners, announced yesterday.

Players could soon have the chance to buy up space in Edinburgh's Princes Street or Manchester's Deansgate rather than Old Kent Road and Mayfair, landmarks of the game which went on sale in 1935. There will also be versions for Newcastle and Birmingham.

If sales are successful the company hopes to publish games based on hundreds of towns and villages across Britain.

Hasbro and Winning Moves, a British toy firm, are allowing companies to sponsor the regional property on the boards.

Brian Cartmel, a spokesman for the company, said: "The new boards will be particularly popular for the people who actually live in the four cities. Monopoly outsells just about every board game in the world and is certainly one of the most remarkable marketing stories of all time."

All four new games will be launched later this year and the company hopes they will be top sellers at Christmas.

Since the game was introduced it has sold more than 100 million copies in 80 countries and has been produced in 23 languages.

To Hasbro's disappointment it has been refused permission to use the names of regional jails, such as Manchester's Strangeways.

Predatory gays 'will be stopped'

HOME OFFICE ministers yesterday reassured Lords opponents to the reduction of the age of gay sexual consent that the Government is considering introducing a new offence to stop predatory gays from abusing positions of trust.

The announcement will be seen as an attempt to prevent the Lords from overturning the Commons free vote to equalise the age of consent for gays and heterosexuals at 16.

Home Office minister Alan Michael said last night that the Whitehall working party on safeguards for children would be

looking carefully at the concerns about vulnerable 16- and 17-year-olds expressed in the Commons on 23 June when MPs voted overwhelmingly to reduce the gay age of consent to 16.

A cross-party group of peers, led by the former Tory leader of the Lords, Baroness Young, is threatening to overturn that vote next week when the Crime and Disorder Bill is discussed in the Upper House.

It will take place at the same time as bishops will be attending the Lambeth Conference, which is expected to be dominated by the Church's own gay rights controversy over international demands by clergy for gay marriages to be celebrated in church.

In a Commons written answer yesterday, Mr Michael reassured opponents that the Government was considering adopting a safeguard, proposed during the Commons debate by Labour MP Joe Ashton, to protect teenage boys from predatory older homosexual men who were caring for them. It would mean that in cases

where there was a duty of trust, gay sex would still be an offence up to the age of 18.

The minister said the working party, which will meet at the end of the month, will study the definition of a position of trust, the occupations to be covered, the definition of those who need to be protected, the kind of behaviour to be prohibited, and possible mechanisms for prohibiting such behaviour.

Proposals will take into account the need to protect both boys and girls and to avoid criminalising the younger partner. The group will pay particular

attention to recommendations dealing with selecting staff.

Mr Michael said: "Protection of vulnerable 16- and 17-year-olds from abuse of trust by predatory adults is an area where the Government is determined to take action."

"We have already undertaken a number of other initiatives to protect children and vulnerable adults from the dangers of sex offenders. However, this is an area which needs further consideration."

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"It is vital that any recommendations protect both boys and girls."

FURNITURE LIGHTING FABRICS CHINA GLASS GIFTS RUGS BEDLINEN KITCHENS

HEALS' SALE
ENDS TOMORROW

TOTTENHAM CRT RD W1 KINGS RD SW3 TUNSGATE GUILDFORD

BRITAIN TODAY

Noon today

OUTLOOK

Northern Scotland will be mainly cloudy with outbreaks of rain, some heavy. Eastern Scotland will have a few sunny spells and afternoon showers. Western Scotland will be cloudy with frequent showers, some of them heavy. Northern Ireland, together with northern and western England will have a mix of sunshine and showers, although most of the showers will be out towards evening. Southern and eastern England will stay largely dry with some warm sunny periods.

NEXT FEW DAYS

Heavy rain across Northern Ireland, the West Country and Wales at first tomorrow will spread northwards and eastwards for the afternoon. South-east England may stay dry all day with some warm sunshine developing. On Monday, northern Scotland will have rain and most of UK will have showers. It will remain fairly warm and generally dry in the south, Tuesday and Wednesday will see some sunny intervals interspersed with periods of rain.

YESTERDAY

BRITISH ISLES WEATHER

Most recent available figure at noon local time	KEY: C: Cloudy; F: fog; H: haze; M: mist; R: rain; S: sunny; St: sleet; Sh: showers; SN: snow; Th: thunder	Aberdeen C 16 61 Anglesay C 18 64 Argy C 15 52 Belfast C 11 53 Birm'dham C 20 52 Blackpool F 11 43 Bournemouth C 11 43 Brighton F 10 44 Bristol C 11 24 Cardiff C 12 41 Carlisle F 16 84	Dover C 13 44 Dublin C 15 41 Edinburgh C 13 43 Exeter C 18 41 Glasgow C 11 41 Gloucester C 11 41 Guernsey C 11 41 Harrogate C 11 41 Inverness C 11 41 Jersey C 11 41 Liverpool C 11 41	London C 18 61 Manchester C 12 61 Newcastle C 15 61 Oxford C 18 61 Plymouth C 18 61 Scarborough C 18 61 Southampton C 18 61 Southend C 18 61 Stirling C 18 61 Swansea C 18 61 York C 18 61
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AIR QUALITY

Yesterday's readings

London	NO ₂	PM ₁₀	O ₃
S. England	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
C. England	Good	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good	Good

SUN & MOON

Sun rises: 05.04
Sun sets: 21.09
Moon rises: 01.12
Moon sets: 15.48
New Moon: July 23rd

WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecasts follow the two day-its for your area indicated by the map (right). Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Algeria	28	84	Luxembourg	13	55
Algeria	28	84	Madrid	22	70
Algeria	28	84	Málaga	22	70
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Algeria	28	84	Málaga	22	70
Algeria	28	84	Málaga	22	70

THE WORLD

ATLANTIC CHART, NOON TODAY

Low F will fill as Low K moves east and deepens. High T will continue to decline.

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

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Algeria	28	84	Madrid	22	70
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Algeria	28	84	Málaga	22	70
Algeria	28	84	Málaga	22	70
Algeria	28	84	Málaga	22	70



Above: Police arresting Eric Ryckaert, Festina team doctor, this week. Below: Mario Cipolini winning the fifth stage of the Tour at Chateauroux. Despite constant pleas from riders, commercial pressures ensure that the more strenuous races are devised, the more sponsorship money can be brought in
Pascal Pavani/EPA

Once they pedalled to glory. Now, are they just peddling drugs?

ONE DOES not know whether to be surprised, or surprised that anyone is surprised.

Like the French police chief in the movie *Casablanca*, the organisers of the Tour de France say that they are shocked, shocked, to discover that senior officials of a cycling team have been arrested on suspicion of handling performance-enhancing drugs.

The trainer of the Festina team, Willy Voet, was arrested last week crossing the Belgian-French border in team car with a suitcase full of staminant-boosting, anabolic steroid drugs in the boot.

Two more men have been arrested this week: the sporting director of the Festina team, Bruno Roussel, a man who has consistently attacked the use of drugs in the sport; and the team doctor, Eric Ryckaert, who is also wanted for questioning as part of drug-investigation in Belgium and Holland. The police and examining judge say that they are refusing to cooperate with their inquiries.

What can they have intended to do with the drugs? Give them to their team members, who include one of the great hopes of French cycling, Richard Virenque?

Surely not. The Festina team members have consistently tested clean of drugs since the three-week race began in Dublin last weekend. There is no question, say the Tour or-

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

ganisers, of throwing one of the best teams out of the race, even if its leaders are under arrest. Perhaps the team official needed the steroids for their own use.

As *Liberation* wrote yesterday, France has been "brutally plucked from the 'paradise of the World Cup' and plunged into the 'cesspool' of the Tour de France, the world's greatest, and most pharmaceutically influenced, cycle race.

Every one knows that the Tour de France - as now constituted, with longer and harder stages and more and bigger teams - would be humanly impossible without drugs, cer-

tainly impossible in the times the riders achieve. Despite constant pleas from the cyclists themselves to reduce the load, commercial pressures ensure that the load is not lightened. The more villages and towns that can be included in the race, the more strenuous races-within-the-race that can be devised, the more sponsorship money can be brought in.

This is an open secret but everyone pretends it is not so. Year after year, little drugs scandals penetrate the sport's code of silence and the race pedals on regardless.

But is this one scandal too far? Drugs problems are usually dealt with by the sport itself. This time, for the first time, the French legal system

has become involved. Has the Tour de France finally lost the pedals?

The French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, felt the need to intervene this week, saying he was "saddened, not totally surprised" by the affair. He demanded that "light should be shone" on the realities of professional cycling and that the "appropriate conclusions" should be drawn.

In a sense, the decision of the Tour hierarchy to allow Festina - sponsored by a Spanish watch company - to stay in the race is a fair one. Although it is officially denied (90 per cent of cyclists are "clean", say the Tour's official doctors), the majority of professional cyclists take drugs and also drugs to cover up the drugs.

In the Communist party newspaper, *L'Humanite* yesterday, a former cycling team doctor, speaking anonymously, said that almost all professional cyclists were "doped" in one way or another. What the sport should do, he said, was to recognise this fact but stop the upward spiral of drug-taking. Cycling should distinguish, he said, between those who "took drugs to keep going and those who took drugs to win".

"There are many teams, who test their riders' blood daily to know exactly how they are doing. If they lack a little of this, they are administered it. If they could do with a little bit of that, they are given it."

The latest wheezes are to create cocktails of growth hormones and the drug erythropoietin (EPO), which boosts the production of red blood cells. Taken together the drugs are very effective but undetectable. If this fails, cyclists have blood extracted in the team caravan just before the drugs test to reduce their red cell count. Other substances widely used include cortisone, which reduces inflammation of the muscles, gives a sense of euphoria and therefore increases endurance.

One rider quoted in *Liberation* said: "EPO is a fantastic product. If you take it, and your opponents do not, your performance is 15-20 per cent superior. I've used it with great success. The problem is that now every little rider is using it."

Denis Riché, a nutritionist who worked with the Festina team until last year, said that he resigned because it sickened him that drugs were so widely abused. He said the sporting director, Bruno Roussel, one of those now under arrest, had sincerely set out to prove that there were safe alternatives to drugs. But the team had grad-

ually succumbed to the "imperatives of success, the obligation to achieve results".

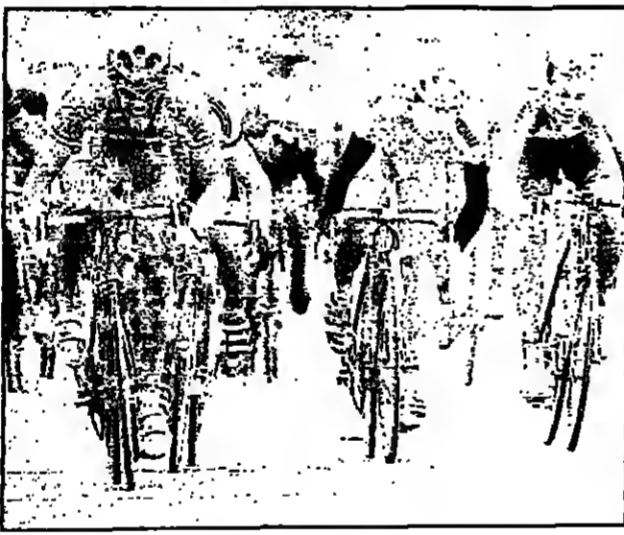
New rules are being introduced by the International Cycling Union next January which, it is claimed, will solve the problem. Instead of tests after each race, professional riders will be regularly tested and examined throughout the year. In theory this will make drug-taking impossible to disguise but the sport has always found detours around controls in the past.

The sadness is that the Tour de France remains, otherwise, a compellingly joyful national

event. Tens of thousands of people line the roads to see it pass their village or town. Despite the huge sums involved, the race retains a family atmosphere. Many great riders stroll among the fans at the end of each stage.

The greater sadness is that the fans themselves do not seem to care that their sport forces cheating on their heroes. Far from being outraged by this week's revelations, fans of Virenque, the Festina team leader, erected banners yesterday reading: "Leave Festina alone. It's only jealousy."

Sport, page 23



Davis (left) and Blackburn: bitter war of words

Insults fly as mortgage chiefs go into battle

BY ANDREW VERITY

A BITTER war of words has broken out between the chief executives of two of Britain's biggest mortgage lenders, Halifax and Nationwide, on the eve of a crucial vote next week on whether Nationwide should convert to a bank.

In angry exchanges, Halifax is accusing Nationwide of repeatedly issuing misleading and inaccurate public statements designed to show it can offer customers a better deal as a building society.

Mike Blackburn, chief executive of the Halifax, has written to Brian Davis, his counterpart at Nationwide, claiming public statements by the Nationwide since April have been riddled with inaccuracies.

Nationwide has been fighting a fierce campaign for more than a year to stave off attempts to force it to follow others on the path to de-mutualisation.

Halifax, which converted last year, is smarting from heavy public criticism as its share of



Davis (left) and Blackburn: bitter war of words

new mortgage business has dwindled to a third of its normal size, while stockbrokers have accused it of "strategic paralysis".

Mr Blackburn claims Nationwide has misled the public repeatedly by issuing misleading statements designed to show Nationwide's products in a better light than similar offerings from the Halifax.

At the heart of the row is an ongoing battle by Halifax to prove it was right to convert to

a bank last year - and by Nationwide to prove it can offer a better deal because it is owned by its members rather than shareholders.

Mr Blackburn's allegations were made public only six days ahead of the result of a poll of the society's 4.5 million members to decide on converting to a bank.

Nationwide yesterday hit back at the Halifax and disputed claims of inaccuracy. It said the press releases in question

were entirely accurate except for a small error caused by its press release distributors.

A spokesman accused the Halifax of seeking to swing the vote in favour of converting to a bank, eliminating the threat from the remaining building societies. The spokesman said: "It seems a bit odd that just a week before the Nationwide's election the Halifax choose to raise this issue - particularly as they have had a difficult time in the recent past because of our competitive actions. They could be perceived as an organisation that may be quite keen for us to convert."

Two million members have already voted in Nationwide's poll. The vote is believed to be running neck and neck.

Nationwide yesterday extended the deadline for voting at branches from lunchtime today to 5pm on Monday. Postal votes must be at Nationwide's offices by 11am on Tuesday. Members can vote at the society's AGM on Thursday at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in Lancaster Terrace, west London.

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Squaddies ran £2.5m drugs ring

A MAJOR drugs trial which has badly damaged the reputation of one of Britain's most famous regiments was drawn to a close yesterday.

Customs officials believe that the 18-month investigation, codenamed Operation Cruiser, involved the smuggling into Britain of up to £12m of heroin, ecstasy, amphetamines and cocaine by soldiers and former servicemen with the 39th Regiment Royal Artillery.

During the trial, it emerged that more than £1m of drugs had been found in two taxi cabs in Liverpool. In all, £2.5m of drugs were seized.

One of the men, Dale Mills, 26, was found guilty of importing narcotics at Liverpool Crown Court yesterday. On Thursday two others - Bombardier Kevin Jones, 31, and former gunner James Bull, 29 - were convicted of taking part in the same two-year plot.

Six other men, four of them either serving or former members of the regiment, based at Abermarle, near Newcastle upon Tyne, have already pleaded guilty to various drug charges. They are serving soldiers Peter Jackson, 29, Paul Bromley, 30, and Billy Gee Stott, 29, a former gunner; Paul Wright, 29, a former gunner; and Peter O'Toole, 26, and 27-year-old Darren Williams. All nine will be sentenced next week. A tenth man, Jason Foster, 25, a lance bombardier, was cleared by the court.

The trial brings to an end one of the most extraordinary and embarrassing cases ever to involve the military in Britain. Customs officers hope it will also cut off one of the major drug supply lines to the North-west.

The ring was exposed two years ago after Customs officers grew suspicious of a foot passenger who arrived at Dover in Kent on a ferry from Calais. They found that the man had receipts for £4,500 cash deposited during the previous month and he claimed he was "hiding property in Dusseldorf".

Officers were further alarmed when he walked over to a red Nissan waiting to leave the docks. He climbed in, the car was pulled over and, on a cloudy night in January 1996, the British Army fell under suspicion of drug-running.

In the Nissan were two off-duty gunners from 39th Regiment Royal Artillery back from Calais on the same sailing as their passenger. They carried

BY JONATHAN FOSTER

passports and authentic military identification.

There was no contraband in the car, and Customs officers were used to soldiers travelling frequently to and from continental postings. But why had Paul Bromley and Peter Jackson picked up Peter O'Toole in the car park? Why would soldiers from barracks in the North-east travel out from Hull



Convicted: Dale Mills (top) and James Bull

and return two days later through Calais? And why had two storage spaces been created in the car, concealed behind the rear seat?

Customs let the three men go, but an investigation was launched which revealed that the soldiers spent time off-duty using their private cars and Army identification to run a 13-trip drugs caravan from Holland to Liverpool.

"The Army were shaken," a Customs investigator said. "It was the first time military personnel had been involved at this level. There have been cases discovered of small quantities of drugs for personal use by soldiers, but nothing on this scale."

The gang's trial heard that soldiers enjoyed a "privileged

position as travellers". But any privilege has now ended, according to Customs and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

"Customs officers haven't known since abolition of British forces number plates if cars entering the country belonged to squaddies," the Customs investigator said. "But an officer may still have been swayed - he gives a car a pull, the driver shows his passport and then flashes a warrant card. The officer doesn't associate a soldier with drugs smuggling."

Military Police seconded an investigator to work with the 20-member Customs team, and co-operation has subsequently become routine, including regular sharing of intelligence.

"We didn't think smuggling by soldiers happened before," a MoD spokesman said. "Other men in 39th Regiment had noticed that something wasn't quite right with these men - extra money in their pockets, car loans being paid off, that sort of thing."

The soldiers were being paid between £2,500 a trip, a cheap rate for loading a hatchback with a typical payload of eight kilograms of drugs plus 48,000 tablets. But it was good money for men such as Bromley and Jones, gunners in their thirties taking home about £550 a month. Bromley paid £27,525 into his TSB accounts during the 18 months.

When 39th Regiment took its multiple rocket launchers off on a tour of duty in Cyprus in June 1996, regular runners were decommissioned. But Jones remained in Britain and readily assumed the drug courier duties. He bought a Honda Civic, made three runs to the continent, and banked £22,800.

Suspicious at barracks of new-found wealth identified many of the soldiers to the investigation team. But command was probably vested in O'Toole, the foot passenger who first aroused suspicion. A 26-year-old Liverpoolian who variously described himself as a Merchant Navy cook or a painter and decorator, O'Toole's mobile phone and pager were busy. He also handled distribution of the drugs in Liverpool and banked £81,000 during the 18 months.

It is a tale that has severely damaged the reputation of the regiment. Its motto - Whither Right and Glory Lead - has been left tainted.



Richard Rodriguez on one of the many high points of his continuing battle in Blackpool to hold on to his roller-coaster-riding record

Can't stop now - I'm on a roll

HE IS bruised, battered but not beaten. Richard Rodriguez has broken the 600-hour world roller-coaster riding record but won't step off the big dipper at Blackpool pleasure beach.

Just behind him in the record stakes is Normand St Pierre riding a roller-coaster in Montreal. "That's the killer," said Mr Rodriguez, 39, a lecturer in English and history from Miami.

The wind whips away his words as the roller-coaster car dips. "I can't say when I will get

BY ESTHER LEACH

off until I know what Normand is doing."

Mr Rodriguez's supporters are keeping tabs on his rival via the Internet but there is no sign of him giving up.

The roller-coaster marathon started in Blackpool on 18 June when Mr Rodriguez, who has held the world record since 1994, began the non-stop ride with five-minute breaks every hour. Mr St Pierre started his record attempt 48 hours later.

A month on, with the world record smashed last Wednesday by Mr Rodriguez, he is still on the ride which pitches him 70ft into the air and then drops him to ground level, reaching speeds of 35mph.

He gets about five hours' sleep per night in the carriage which has been specially adapted for him. The central divider has been removed so he can stretch his legs and side panels have been constructed to stop his belongings falling out. There is plenty of foam-rub-

ber padding and a tarpaulin to protect him through the night. He wears ear plugs to ensure he does get some sleep. In the morning he spends about an hour - made up of stored five-minute breaks - out of the carriage to take a hot shower and eat breakfast. Snacks and other meals he eats on the ride.

He beats off boredom by listening to his favourite music including Nat King Cole, The Beatles and other Sixties pop music. He reads newspapers between dips.

"The weather hasn't been too kind," Mr Rodriguez added, looking tired and weather-beaten. "I've been lashed by wind and rain. I haven't been getting very much sleep."

He was afraid of roller-coasters as a child but conquered his fear at the age of 16 when he rode one on Coney Island. He set his first roller-coaster record on that same ride in 1977. Since then his achievements have been recognised by roller-coaster enthusiasts around the world.

Britain wants ban on dumping rigs

THE UK is looking at a "close to zero" option for acceptable levels of radioactive substances in the sea when ministers hold a top level meeting in Portugal next week.

The Environment Minister, Michael Meacher, also announced a complete ban on dumping of redundant steel oil rigs. The UK is committed to returning all disused offshore installations to land "where it is safe and practical to do so".

The moves come amid growing controversy over radioactive discharges from the Sellafield nuclear plant in Cumbria - and the recent row over dumping of the Brent Spar storage depot, which will now be cut up and used to build a marine terminal.

Mr Meacher, who with the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, shares worries over the spread of radioactive substances reaching the food chain, will push the case for tough curbs on all forms of pollution at sea at the conference in Sintra.

Fears over the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant surfaced at a recent meeting

BY AMANDA BROWN

between the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the Norwegian premier, Kjell Bondevik.

The Norwegians have found an increase in radioactive elements technetium-99 along their coastline and say it is contamination from a byproduct of the reprocessing of spent nuclear power station fuel and it was traced back to Sellafield.

Environmental lobby groups want the Government to ban all radioactive discharges from Sellafield.

But Mr Meacher said: "At the September meeting of the Oslo (Oslo and Paris) commission last year, we restated our wish to make progress on reducing radioactive discharges to sea."

"We will certainly fulfil that commitment. I want to agree a strategy that is achievable. We are looking for a strategy to guide Oskar over the next 20 years. But the wording will only be agreed at ministerial level."

"A number of alternative proposals have been put forward including one which calls for concentrations in the ma-

rine environment close to zero for manmade radioactive substances."

Mr Meacher rejected the suggestion that the Government was giving the green light to Sellafield's discharges.

He said: "I don't accept that there is a distinction or contradiction between what we are trying to achieve at Oskar and the current discharge application being made in regard to Sellafield."

Mr Meacher was asked how he would respond to pressure at Oskar from Nordic countries for a total ban on Sellafield discharges. He said: "There are a number of positions which have been tabled and one is that there should be a reduction in radioactive discharges to background levels naturally occurring in the environment."

"Another is that there should be a reduction close to zero and ultimately cessation. Those are the basic differences of position and that is what we have got to negotiate on and try and seek agreement on."

"It is true of course that the second would be incompatible with the continuation of the nuclear industry."

Bristol heart doctor launches appeal

A DOCTOR involved in the Bristol heart surgery tragedy is to appeal against the Bristol General Medical Council's decision to strike him off the register.

Dr John Roylance, former chief executive of the Bristol Royal Infirmary, is taking his case to the Privy Council. He was found guilty of serious professional misconduct by the GMC last month for failing to halt operations in which 29 babies died. James Wisheart, the senior surgeon involved in the case has not appealed but Janardan Dhasmana, his junior colleague, has until Monday to

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

make up his mind. Mr Wisheart was struck off and Mr Dhasmana was banned from operating on children for three years.

Dr Roylance argued that most chief executives were not doctors and fell outside the remit of the GMC. The fact that he was also a doctor was irrelevant. He told the inquiry that when it came to clinical matters, he did not consider it his role to interfere. Dr Roylance, however, was a doctor and the legal advice given to the council was



John Roylance: struck off

that they should consider only his duties as a doctor, not as chief executive.

His appeal will be held in public before the Privy Council's judicial committee of three law lords and is expected to begin later this year.

IN BRIEF

Death threats issued to Orange Order chaplains who spoke out

DEATH THREATS have been issued to three Orange Order chaplains who appealed to protesters at Drumcree to go home after the murders of the three Quinn children.

One of those threatened was Rev William Bingham, the first member of the organisation publicly to declare that an Orange march on the nationalist Garvaghy Road would be a "hollow victory" in the shadow of three coffins.

Warnings were also given to the Rev Warren Porter and the Rev Robert Coulter.

Bosses' salaries outstrip inflation

BRITISH EXECUTIVES' salaries far outstrip inflation and the trend is set to accelerate over the next three years, according to a survey by consultants William M. Mercer. Executive bonuses were up 50 per cent of salary and share option gains have increased, said the survey of the 20 largest British and U.S. companies.

Jury undecided on baby's murder

A JURY last night failed to reach a decision following the trial of a childminder accused of murdering a five-month-old boy. The jury at Norwich Crown Court deliberated for more than four hours before being told to reconvene on Monday. Helen Stacey, 41, denies killing Joseph Mackin at her home in North Walsham, Norfolk, on 13 May last year.

Christie's holds first 007 auction

A CAR which converts into a submarine used by James Bond in the 1977 film *The Spy Who Loved Me* is to be the highlight of the first auction dedicated to the fictional British secret agent. More than 250 lots of costumes, props, posters and cars epitomising the 18 Bond movies will be sold at Christie's, London, on 17 September.

Modern love is still sweet

LOVE HEARTS sweets, which for generations have been used as tokens of puppy love with messages such as "I love you", have succumbed to new technology. The sweets now carry legends such as "Fax me" and "Be my icon".

Drugs haul inquiry on destroyer

AN INQUIRY is under way after a report that a haul of cannabis was found on a Royal Navy destroyer. The MoD confirmed an inquiry has been launched into HMS Newcastle after a drugs-related incident.

Hughes in race for poetry prize

TED HUGHES'S *Birthday Letters* has been shortlisted for the UK's top poetry prize. He is among five poets in the running for the Best Collection title in the 1998 Forward Prizes, worth £100,000.

FERGAL KEANE

"I feared that three consecutive weeks devoted to Northern Ireland might begin to look like a columnist's monomania"

— THE WEEKEND REVIEW, PAGE 3

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Europe's borders: The case of a Portuguese waiter deported for theft highlights the island's anomalous status

Jersey wins right to expel EU citizens

THE UNIQUE status of Jersey, the largest of the Channel Islands, has been underlined by a judgment handed down by the European Court of Justice.

The court ruled that the Lieutenant-Governor of Jersey, General Sir Michael Wilkes, was within his rights to deport a Portuguese night porter who had been convicted of theft while working at a hotel.

It said that while the Treaty of Rome declares that citizens

of all member states of the EU should be treated equally, Jersey retained the right to deport non-UK nationals. However, it also ruled that if the man had been British he could not have been deported.

Lawyers acting for Rui Alberto Pereira Roque, 24, argued that as an EU national, he should not be treated differently

from a British citizen living in Jersey, who could not be deported. The judgment means that Roque can now only appeal to the Royal Court of Jersey to overturn the deportation order.

Roque, who had been working as a night porter on Jersey since 1992, was convicted on three counts of theft and imprisoned for 14 weeks in the island's jail.

His lawyer, Pierre Landick,

said yesterday that Roque was currently working in England. "There are a number of points outstanding. We are now waiting for the Royal Court to give its ruling on our appeal even though the likelihood is now that the European Court of Justice has given its opinion the Royal Court will say the deportation was legal."

Mr Landick added: "Two questions remain. Should a deportation order ever be made

and secondly whether Mr Roque's crime warranted deportation. This has been hanging over him for three and a half years and he has been under a lot of pressure."

The ruling was welcomed by the island authorities. John Noel, deputy chief inspector in the island's Immigration Department, said: "What was at stake was the interpretation of the law. This has given us the same rights as the UK."

Martin Furzer, the island's chief immigration officer, said he believed the 10,000-strong Portuguese community on the island was just as concerned as the Jersey authorities in "weeding out" those people who break the law.

The case highlighted Jersey's unique status within the British Isles. Along with neighbouring Guernsey, it is a Bailiwick controlled by a bailiff. It is not part of the UK but a de-

pendency of the Crown, and has been semi-autonomous since 1204. Its own elected 53-member parliament, the States, is responsible for everything apart from foreign relations and defence. All legislation has to be approved by the Privy Council, while the Lieutenant-Governor represents the Crown.

The case has highlighted one of the most hotly debated issues on the island - immi-

gration. The current population officially stands at around 85,000 but some believe it is higher and there is growing concern about the size of the population on a island measuring just nine miles by five.

The generous tax regime on Jersey attracts hundreds of would-be residents, and despite high property prices and stringent rules - unless a would-be resident has a special licence he or she needs at least £20m capital to move here.

An island where the millionaires outnumber the jobless

JERSEY STANDS at a crossroads. Should it look to Europe for its future, has the island become too dependent on its earnings as a tax haven - a centre for off-shore banking?

These are questions increasing asked as the Channel Island approaches the millennium. Where its prosperity was once based on agriculture and tourism, the near-£100bn invested in trusts on Jersey is now the island's main earner.

Les Lebrœcq playing at the La Moye golf course, above St Ouen's Bay, summed it up: "There has been a huge change in recent years. Some of the changes have been fine, others I am not so sure about. There are big banking businesses here making lots of money but are they are putting enough back?"

More than 600,000 tourists last year visited the island, attracted by its combination of French and British culture. The island has its own passport, legal system, language (a Norman patois called Jersey French), and car registration plates, and banknotes, but tourists can use British money.

There are some quaint anachronisms - it has 13 separate police forces - but the island also harbours a certain conservatism. Homosexuality was only legalised in 1990 after strenuous pressure from Westminster and Brussels.

This mix is reflected in the people. They are Jerseymen or

women first, and British second. Many on the island are fiercely royalist but people rankle at the first suggestion of interference from London.

"It is a strange situation," said one man who has spent all his life on the island. "During the World Cup everyone was right behind England, particularly our local boy, Graeme Le Saux."

The pubs were full the nights the games were on and everyone got really into it. "But back in January when Jack Straw ordered an inquiry into the financial arrangements people were up in arms. They just felt he should mind his own business and let us mind ours."

Since the late 1960s, Jersey has been minding its own business particularly well. Lured by the tax arrangements where non-residents pay no income tax on savings, 78 offshore banks currently operate from the island with a total of \$96.5bn held in trusts or accounts.

The advantages are obvious. Financial services account for 90 per cent of the island's gross domestic product, helping maintain a regime where income tax is fixed at 20 per cent and there is no VAT, capital gains tax or inheritance duty.

Schools and health care are famously second to none. Unemployment stands at around 400 in a population of 85,000.



The Liberation Statue in Liberation Square, St Helier, erected to mark the liberation of Jersey from the Nazis on 16 July 1945

Peter Mordant

Manchester schools to earn cash bonus for problem pupils

SCHOOLS WILL be paid bonuses to take on problem children under proposals drawn up by Manchester council leaders in the wake of a highly critical inspection report.

The "dowry" system will pay schools up to £5,000 a year - double their normal budget - to take on children who have already been permanently excluded from another school.

Council leaders will establish an expulsions "hit squad" and set tough targets for improving special-needs education to counter criticisms by inspectors.

The city is also planning a network of new centres for children who have been expelled, employing the latest computer technology to attract them back into classes.

The proposals were contained in an action plan sent to ministers yesterday outlining how the authority intends to deal with failings identified in the first of a national programme of inspections.

The education regulator, Ofsted, said that the Labour-run council had failed in its legal duties because it had not provided education for 140 expelled pupils, despite 12,000 surplus places in the city's schools, which cost £2m a year.

Inspectors were sharply critical of the authority's policy for dealing with children with special needs. They also said that too many pupils were playing

truant and that achievement was low.

Under the plans, which are being considered by ministers, the council will set school-by-school targets for cutting the number of pupils expelled or suspended.

A small team of specialists will work with social services, the police and health workers to try to stop children being expelled and provide alternatives for those who are thrown out.

Many of the proposals draw heavily on the recommendations of the Government's Social Exclusion Unit, which reported on truancy and expulsions earlier this year.

Yesterday, Roy Johnson, Manchester's director of education, said the authority was

pouring £1.1m from reserves into a "firefighting exercise" to bring the expelled children back into education.

He said: "We are acutely aware of the problems and weaknesses here and we are working hard to do something about it. We have put forward ideas for pilots and experiments to try to deal with the underlying problems."

"The deprivation in Manchester is off the scale. But most of the problems are not Manchester problems. They are problems of urban areas with a high level of deprivation."

He repeated criticism of the Ofsted report, arguing that most of the problems highlighted in it had already started to be tackled, and said he

was confident targets would be met. But he stressed the 140 expelled children highlighted by inspectors represented the most difficult cases.

Richard Leese, chairman of Manchester City Council, said: "We fully accept the criticism of Ofsted about the past performance of the LEA (local education authority) with regard to educational provision for pupils excluded from school."

"We will be setting up a thorough administrative framework to ensure we are dealing with all excluded children and ensuring that they continue to receive education. For most children that will be by getting them back into school as soon as possible. But it may be hard work and in some cases impossible."

Bullying victims chase big payouts

GOVERNORS of the school at the centre of an ex-teacher's bullying case fully backed the headteacher and staff today.

They stressed that none of allegations of torment made by former deputy head Anthony Ratcliffe had been proved.

Mr Ratcliffe, 48, won more than £100,000 damages in a landmark out of court settlement after blaming more than 12 months of bullying for two mental breakdowns which forced him to quit teaching.

Now a self-employed kitchen fitter, he was backed by his union, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, who started proceedings in the High Court.

Pembrokeshire County Council agreed a settlement but denied his allegations.

Meanwhile, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers said it had been "inundated" since the settlement with calls from other people alleging they were suffering from bullying.

Lawyers acting for the union are already involved in another "seven or eight" cases. More are in the pipeline, a spokesman for the union said.

"We have had calls from teachers who are members of other unions, and also from people outside education altogether, including members of the civil service. People say they're being bullied, too, at work, and asking how they can get help," he said.

Teacher jailed after sex with boy, 15

AN ENGLISH teacher who had sex with a 15-year-old schoolboy while the pair were high on drugs was yesterday jailed for two years.

Lucy Hayward, 30, who has two children, showed no emotion as she was sentenced at Shrewsbury Crown Court.

Judge Michael Mander told Hayward, from Meole Brace, Shrewsbury: "You encouraged children to come to your house and plied them with drugs. You indulged in highly inappropriate sexual behaviour with a

young boy who was so traumatised by it all that he left home."

"Anyone who behaved in this highly inappropriate manner can expect little mercy from any Crown Court judge. Suppose you were a man and the victim was a girl. There would be no question whatsoever that custody would be imposed. Why should the gender make any difference?"

Andrew Lockhart, for the

prosecution, said Hayward had regular sex encounters with the boy after befriending him last year. He said the pair would often smoke cannabis before having sex at the teacher's home.

He said that when police arrested Hayward at her home they found handcuffs, a truncheon, a vibrator, a sex video and an erotic magazine.

She was immediately suspended and last month sacked from her £20,000-a-year post as a teacher at the Abraham

Darby school in Telford, Shropshire. Initially, Hayward denied any wrongdoing and said: "I did not do it, I love my job. The kids at the school love me. I am a very popular teacher."

But in May, she admitted indecent assault, possession of cannabis, and allowing her home to be allowed to smoke the drug.

For the defence, Simon Mills said that Hayward had had an unhappy childhood and had not deliberately set out to give children drugs or seduce them.



Lucy Hayward: guilty

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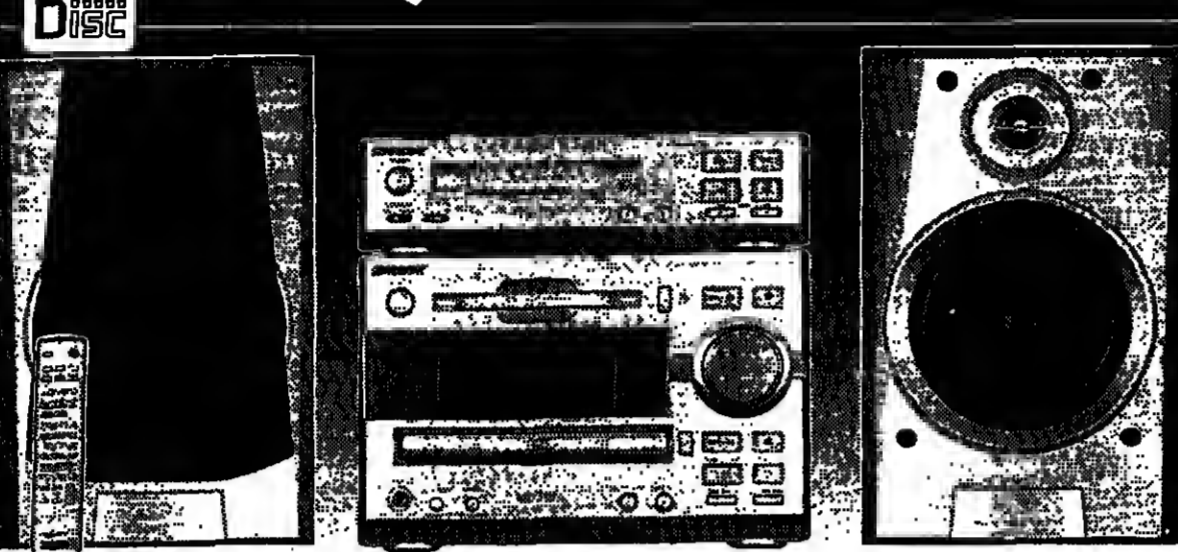
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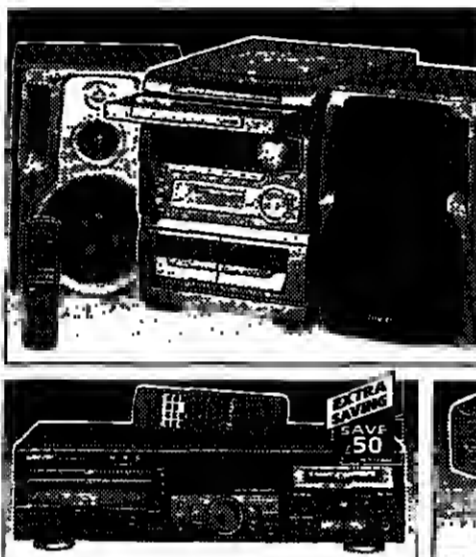
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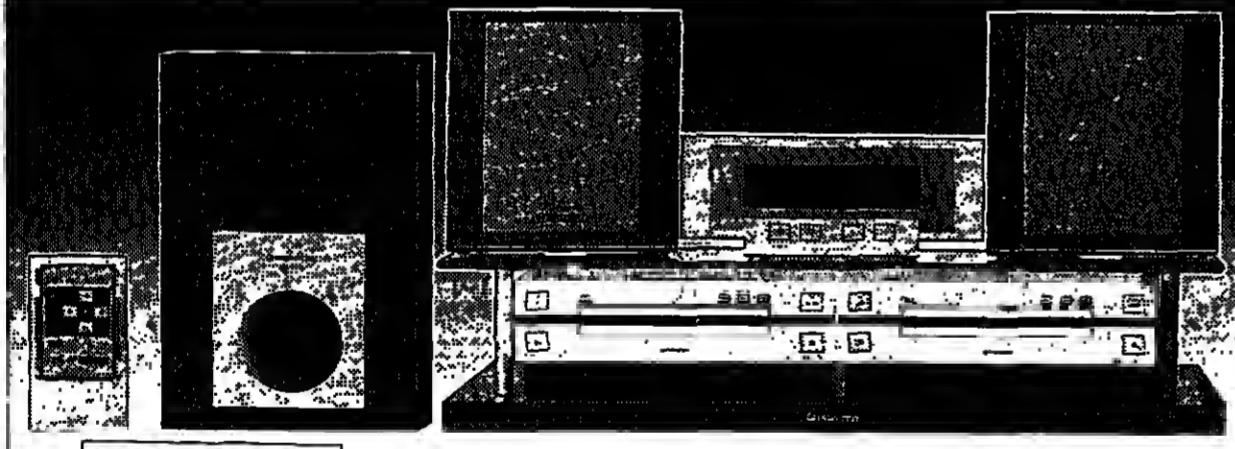
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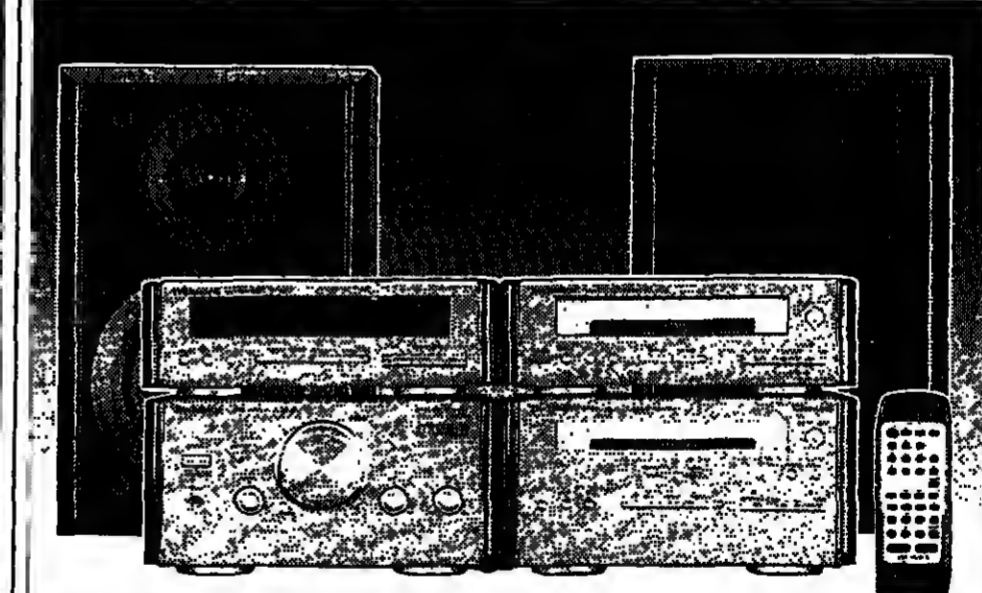
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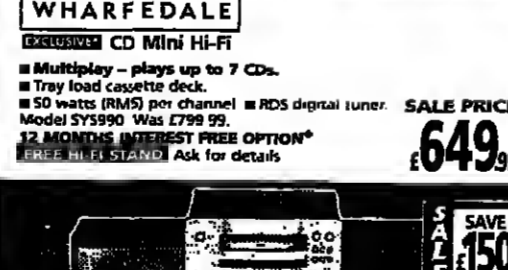
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- Full remote control.
- 100 watts (RMS) per channel.
- Model MHC-W550.
- Was £499.99.
- 9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

SALE PRICE £399.99



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- Tray load cassette deck.
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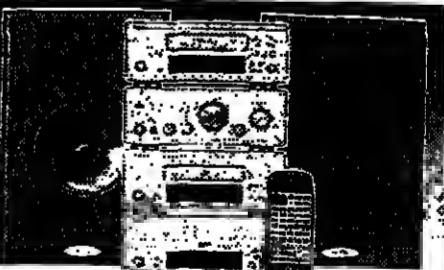
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صكتا من الامل

At the court of the Sun Valley king

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Sun Valley

THE CASUAL eye skimming the *Wood River Journal* might have got quite a shock. "Rupert man dies when hit by boat's propeller", the headline read.

Alcohol was involved. Had Mr Murdoch, the lord of all that he surveys, come all this way just to die in a senseless boat accident fuelled by too much Bud Lite?

But no: Rupert is a small town near this idyllic resort town, and Mr Murdoch was quite safe, ensconced in the splendour of the Sun Valley Resort Lodge, way up in the wilds of Idaho, with his people.

Once every three years, the American magnate sets up shop somewhere to think over his businesses, and he calls in all the parajudges, politicians and press barons that he can muster.

Last time, at Hayman Island, in Australia, it was Tony Blair who visited News Corporation's retreat to bare all.

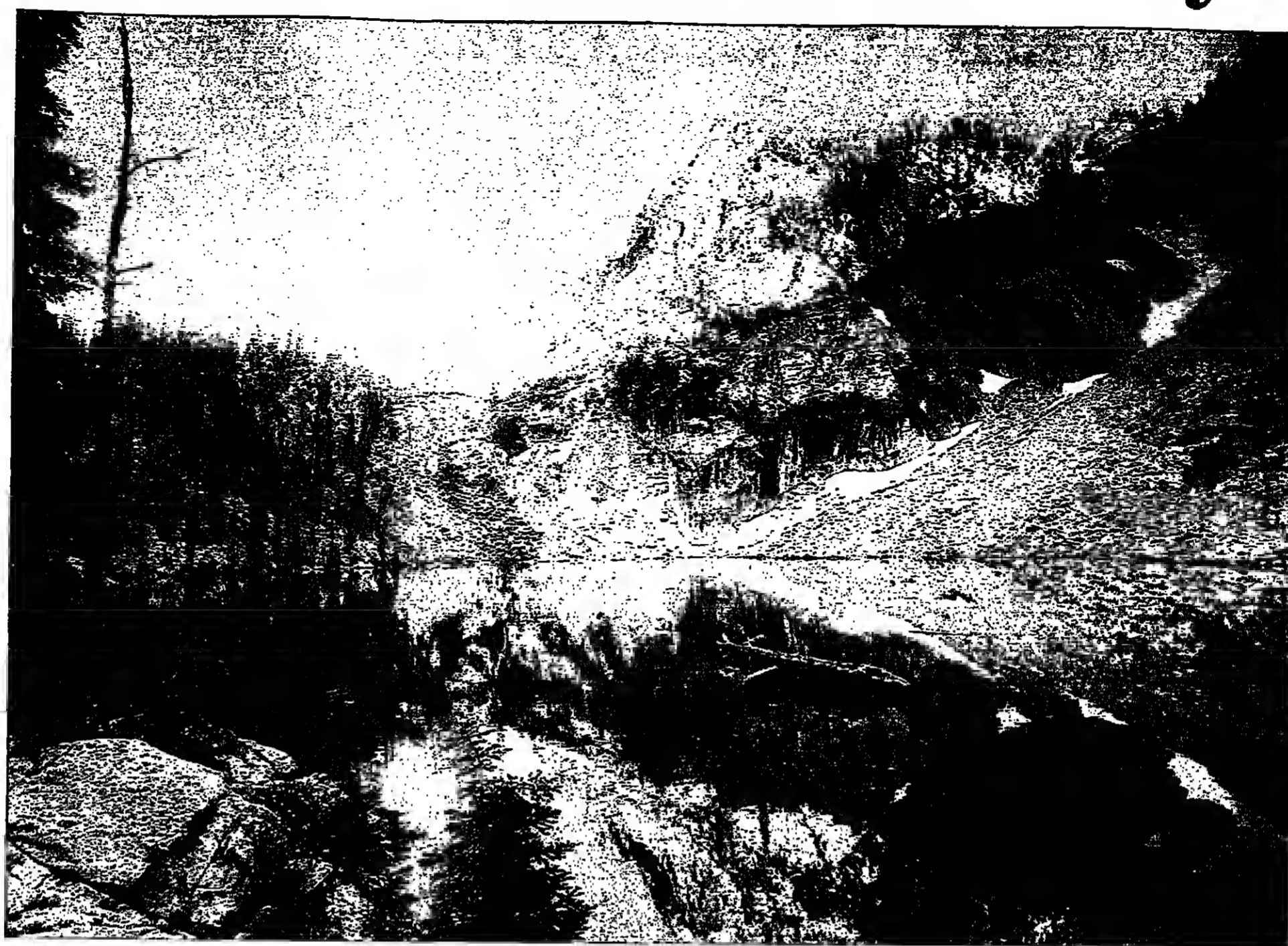
Yesterday, Mr Murdoch's pulling power apparently slightly diminished, it was the turn of Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Of course, everyone wanted to hear words of wisdom from the finance minister who is scheming to replace his prime minister, and the tycoon who makes and breaks governments. Yes, we are talking about Anwar Ibrahim, the Malaysian Finance Minister, and Boris Berezovsky, the billionaire Russian, of course, two of the other star turns. Whatever can Mr Murdoch and Mr Brown have found to discuss with them?

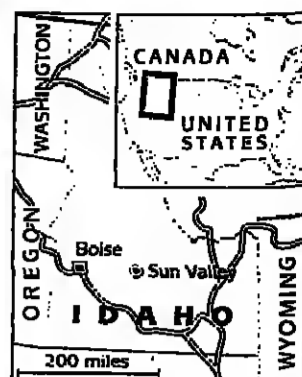
If the word "retreat" conjures up the search for peace in a simple hut in the wilderness, then think again, and check your credit-card balance.

This corner of the Pacific North-West was reserved for Basque shepherds until Count Felix Schuytgen arrived in 1935, sent by the railway tycoon Averell Harriman to find the perfect ski resort for Union Pacific Railroad. Harriman bought the Brass Ranch on Schuytgen's recommendation, and turned a wilderness into the winter resort par excellence.

Now Sun Valley has everything, architecturally speaking at least. It is a mixture of Eng-



Rupert Murdoch (second top right) is holding court, ministered to by Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Russian tycoon Boris Berezovsky



Tony Stone

lish baronial, Tyrolean, and American pastoral, the whole shabang set down in what looks like the Scottish Highlands with the heating turned up.

In pursuit of authenticity, there are some odd touches. The waitresses in the Konditori Café wear Austrian national dress, for example.

And in the inner sanctums of the Lodge, the fires are burning even though it is in the 90s outside.

It has the feeling of all ski re-

sorts out of season, pleasant but a little aimless. The views are spectacular, the comfort and décor always muted and tasteful (apart from those girls in the dirndls).

It took two chartered Boeing 737s from New York City and two 737s from Los Angeles to bring in the 500 or so guests, 300 executives from News Corp's many subsidiaries and their spouses. Nothing has been spared to keep them comfortable while they share their vi-

sions of the 21st century across the conference tables. The leisure opportunities are, as they say in the brochures, unparalleled, though it is to be hoped that not too many became over-excited by the trip to the Gun Club on Thursday.

The British representatives included a team from BSkyB, plus Peter Stothard, editor of *The Times*, and, from the *Sunday Times*, the editor, John Witherow, and Mary Ann Sieghart and Michael Gove.

The Sun was represented by David Yelland, its new editor, Andy Coulson, assistant editor and political editor Trevor Kavanagh.

The motto on the car number plates in Idaho is "Famous Potatoes," a tribute to the agricultural product for which the state is known throughout the world. And the men and women whom Mr Murdoch has drawn here are his Famous Potatoes: the controlling hands behind much of the world's television,

radio, newspapers and cinema, not hidden away in sessions on earth media segment and on greater issues such as the conflict between journalists and advertisers. They have eaten under the stars with each other and met colleagues from far-flung parts of the Murdoch empire, in what can only be described as a media durbar, the equivalent of those great gatherings of the princes and potentates which the British staged in the Raj.

Yesterday was reserved for

the big shots, the Browns and Berezovskys of this world, to put their stamp on things. Perhaps that is all there is to it for the august visitors from the world of politics: a chance to tell it like it is to the Rupert Man.

Perhaps it is enough to share the delightful company, soak up some rays, perhaps risk a few minutes on the ice rink and then scoot off again. Or perhaps there is something more in it for them; and it sure isn't potatoes.

Dublin house prices go up 15% this year

DUBLIN HAS confirmed its status as a European boom town, with a new index showing that houses in the Irish capital rose 15.5 per cent in the first five months of this year.

The latest increase follows a 25-per-cent jump last year and 20-per-cent growth in 1996. It was confirmed in a study prepared by Dublin's Economic and Social Research Institute for Ireland's biggest lender, the Irish Permanent.

Public concern that young buyers were finding it almost impossible to find affordable homes prompted the government to intervene in April amid claims that investors were accounting for 30 per cent of purchases, forcing prices far beyond levels attributable to normal demand.

The Dublin surge compares with an increase outside the city of 10.5 per cent. Galway, one of Europe's fast-growing cities, is also seeing sharp rises.

The April measures, introduced after recommendations from the economist Peter Bacon, cut tax relief for in-

vestors and reduced stamp duty for first-time buyers of second-hand houses.

Among other reforms the government is also moving to increase the supply of new building land by relaxing population-density restrictions later this year. The Central



Prices rose 15.5 per cent in the first five months of the year

Bank has been told to scrutinise lending practices amid fears that some institutions were allowing buyers to borrow more than was prudent.

Property sources say there has been a sharp fall in investor buyers bidding in the weeks since the changes. Since May a substantial number of Dublin houses have been withdrawn from sale by auction as bidding

failed to reach expectations. Also, more second-hand houses are now being offered for sale in the wake of the price growth.

Irish property demand is underpinned by an unusually strong obsession with owning property. Irish home ownership stands at 80 per cent and rising, against a European average of 56 per cent.

Ireland's continuing high growth rate, with GDP up 10.5 per cent last year (the highest in the OECD area for the third successive year) and demographic factors, suggest housing demand will keep growing.

The victims of the property boom have been lower-paid workers in the rented sector. A survey by the Threshold housing action group found that of those on incomes of under £10,000 a year, 25 per cent are paying £400 a month rent, though some of these share.

It also found a significant proportion pay in excess of 40 per cent of income in rent. It suggested runaway rent levels may also be pushing up demand to buy.

Widow's hitman case rejected

A MAGISTRATE yesterday dismissed conspiracy charges against the widow and two children of a retired major who had been accused of hiring a hitman to kill him.

Jackie Leeming, 55, her son Stephen, 33, and daughter Jayne, 30, were charged with conspiracy to murder 63-year-old Geoffrey Leeming after he was found stabbed to death in the garage of his York home.

The prosecution had alleged that the trio hired a hitman to kill Mr Leeming because they feared that he would find out about their lavish lifestyles, which he was unwittingly financing through the falling family business.

BY LISA SALMOND

But stipendiary magistrate Gary Hodgson said at the end of a committal hearing at York Magistrates' Court that there was not enough evidence to commit the three for trial at crown court. The prosecution was trying to make "solid bricks out of straw", he said, adding: "Having looked at all the evidence I still reach the conclusion that what was said to be evidence was still a theory. The police are no nearer solving this investigation than they were at the beginning."

But he committed the three, plus family accountant Malcolm Herbert, 37, for trial on

charges of fraudulent trading. Paul Worsley QC, for the prosecution, had said that the conspiracy to murder charges comprised "an unusual case" which rested entirely on circumstantial evidence.

Mr Leeming was stabbed through the heart as he went to check his garage in October 1998. His wife found him collapsed in a pool of blood. A sharp bloodstained knife was found close to the house.

The court was told that the family owned drainage business was on the brink of failure but that large amounts of money were still being withdrawn, at the expense of creditors. Mr Worsley had alleged they want-

ed access to Mr Leeming's money to save the business. The killer has not been caught.

After the case Jackie Leeming, speaking on behalf of the family, said that they had "been through a living nightmare".

She added: "My husband, their father, who we dearly loved and who we miss every day was murdered. In the past year we have needed all our strength to fight these unfounded allegations."

"Now we would like some privacy to come to terms with the reality of Geoff's death and grieve in our own way."

A charge of conspiracy to murder against Mr Herbert was also formally dismissed.

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New Parliament: The Prime Minister flies north with a mission to stop a haemorrhage of Labour support to the Nationalists



Tony and Cherie Blair, with Donald Dewar, on the steps of the Caledonian Hotel in Edinburgh David Moir

Blair urges Scots to remain in UK

TONY BLAIR flew north yesterday to try to staunch the haemorrhaging of Labour support to the Nationalists and in effect begin the fight for control of the Scottish Parliament.

Scotland was facing a choice of two futures, the Prime Minister said - a new partnership with the rest of Britain, based on prosperity, a better health service, more jobs and good schools; or separatism with a party that wanted to "wrench Scotland out of the United Kingdom".

In a powerful speech in Edinburgh, he ridiculed the Scottish National Party as a one-issue band who wanted to retreat into isolation and the past. "Solidarity, not separatism has always been Labour's creed," he told an audience of most of the party's 169 hopefuls

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent

for the home-rule elections in 10 months' time. "Ours is not a politics about passports. Ours is a politics about principles."

Mr Blair's repeated emphasis on solidarity and social justice will be welcomed by party members in Scotland who had feared these old virtues forgotten by New Labour.

Alex Salmond, leader of the SNP said Mr Blair's "away day" to Scotland was only happening because of New Labour's panic at the rise of the SNP. "It illustrates Labour's key weakness in Scotland, which is that they are a London-controlled party, who take their orders straight from Big Brother Blair."

The Nationalists believe they are on to an electoral winner in

describing themselves always as "Scotland's Party", something which UK-wide Labour cannot claim. Labour in Scotland is repeatedly mocked as "a branch office of Millbank Tower".

With Labour trailing behind the SNP by up to 14 per cent in the opinion polls, and beset by council scandals and internal rows, most party loyalists will greet Mr Blair's intervention with relief. He set about the SNP with a bruising vigour alien to Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Labour's pledge for Scotland was "a partnership for good", Mr Blair said. All the SNP could offer was separatism, with taxes up to pay for it, the economy put at risk and hospitals and schools without the funding they needed.

In language strongly remi-

niscient of that used by the Conservatives last year in opposing devolution, Mr Blair said the British people remained united by a common history, standing together to defeat fascism and working together to build a modern welfare state.

Even the architect of the NHS 50 years ago, Aneurin Bevan, was wheeled out to support the union case. "Nye Bevan was Welsh," Mr Blair said. "But what mattered ... was not his national identity. It was his sense of social justice."

Earlier, Mr Salmond told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that Mr Blair was out of touch with the Scottish people, saying that if Mr Blair had to be summoned north to "sort out the SNP it does rather illustrate the fact that [Labour] is a London-dominated party".

Does Middle Scotland really exist?

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN

ONE PHRASE coined in a radio phone-in - "Middle Scotland" - has provoked an outpouring of indignant media comment and vox pops.

Tony Blair's attempt to claim "there's a Middle Scotland as well as a Middle England" appeared to have badly backfired. How can the Prime Minister claim to understand Scots when he compares them to Middle England, a term understood here to mean the aspirational residents of the South-east?

In a country submerged in issues of national character and identity, it matters not that exactly this type of person exists in comparable numbers in Scotland. They are probably thicker on the ground in Edinburgh than just about anywhere in England. But the suggestion of a similarity irked, and enabled Scottish National Party leader, Alex Salmond, to crow about another "Blair blunder".

In Scotland there is a belief that Middle England voted with its wallet, inferring that mainstream Scotland views tax increases to pay for schools and hospitals with equanimity. Winnie Ewing, the SNP's veteran member of the European Parliament, underlined this view yesterday. Scotland was a much more "egalitarian" nation than England, she said.

Despite that, social deprivation in parts of Glasgow and on the fringes of Edinburgh is as bad as anywhere in the United Kingdom and the passage between what once would have been called working-class areas and leafier professional zones is stark. Talk of an egalitarian nation against this background of "haves and have nots" may be mere sentimentality.

For Mr Blair and his New Labour team, the common de-

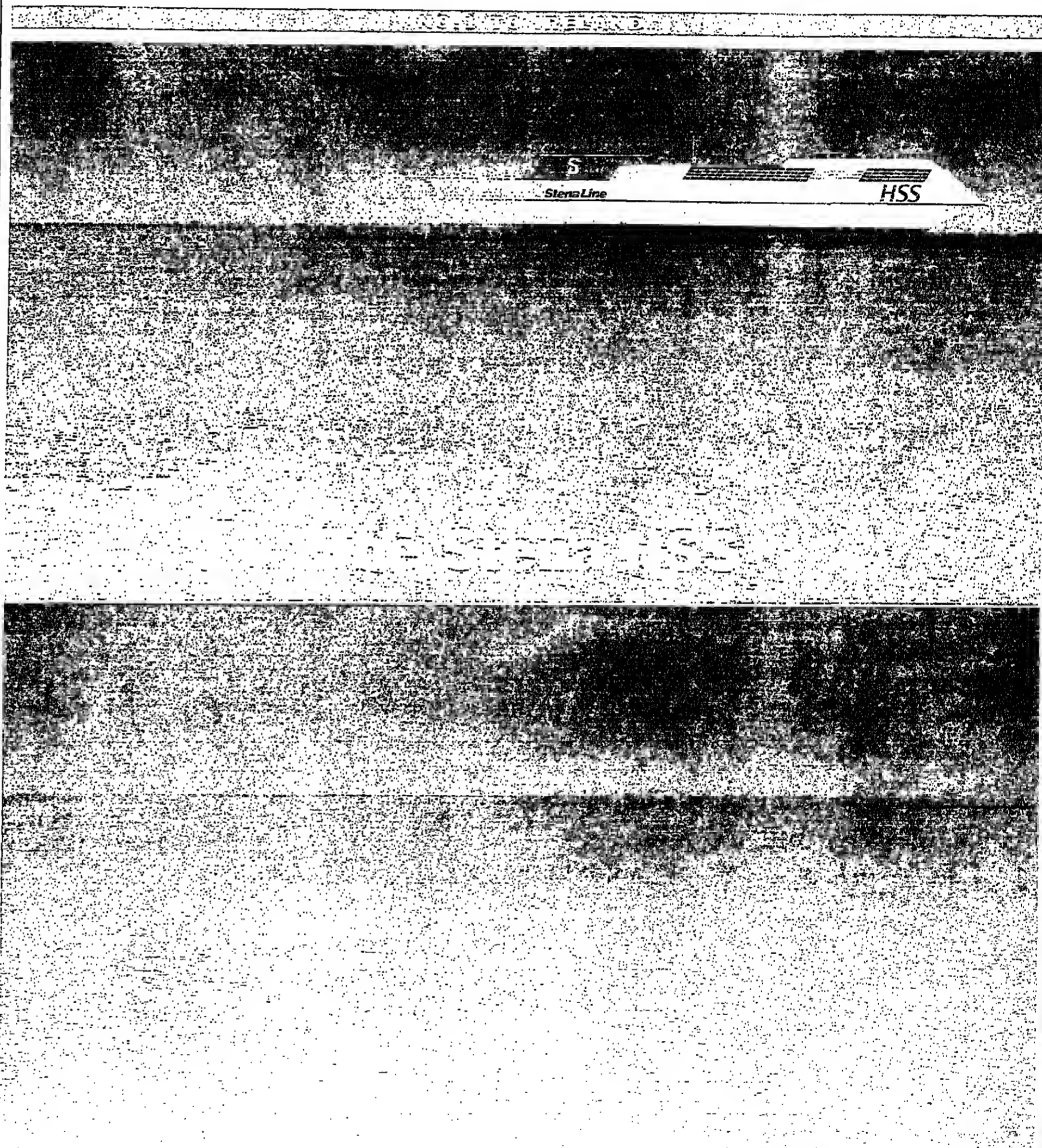
nominator of these two "middle" is that they are the floating voters Labour needs to win elections. They are generally aspirational, often people who want better jobs for their children than their blue-collar backgrounds. In England, this meant not so much the Home Counties stereotype sneered at by the Scots as Essex Man and his cousins in the Midlands, where former Labour parliamentary seats had gone over to Baroness Thatcher.

In Scotland, the same hard-working, aspiring middle ground is there but it has followed a different electoral track. Under the Conservatives, it continued to vote Labour and now it is increasingly telling pollsters it will support the nationalists.

Labour has only itself to blame. New Labour seems a wholly London show, epitomised by the Millennium Dome, while Old Labour in Scotland is beset with scandal after scandal.

Mr Blair has a knack of rubbing the sensitive Scots up the wrong way with his off-the-cuff remarks and Mr Salmond has a talent for exploiting them as examples of London Labour. During the referendum campaign it was an easily distorted comparison between the Edinburgh Parliament and parish councils, and now it is Middle Scotland.

But, however unfortunate the phrase, Mr Blair knows his target. With this week's £1.3bn extra for education and £1.8bn on the health service, followed by the attacks on separatism and his appeal to solidarity and social justice, the Prime Minister has shown a belated awareness of mainstream Scotland's concerns and given Mr Salmond notice of a fight.



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DESPATCHES FROM THE FRONTIERS OF MEDICINE

EAGERNESS among men, or possibly their partners, to see if the Viagra anti-impotence drug lives up to its promise has lifted sales so impressively that the manufacturer, Pfizer, is extending the factory that makes its key ingredient.

Its plant at Ringaskiddy, near Cork, in the Irish Republic, the only place making the unique chemical, is to be expanded at a cost of £120m, the company confirmed this week. The drug has yet to secure approval in Europe, but has achieved monthly sales of \$400m (£250m) since April as a result of 2.7 million prescriptions.

The sales surge has helped lift Irish exports sharply. Exports of "organic chemicals", which include Viagra, jumped 61 per cent in January and February against the same period in 1997, according to the Central Statistics Office.

Sales of the "Pfizer riser" helped boost total Irish exports in March to £12.8bn, the highest yet recorded.



Paddy Caffrey, Pfizer's managing director in Ireland, said that the expansion would add 100 staff at the Ringaskiddy plant, currently employing 320, plus 400 temporary building jobs. "It's a tremendous boost to the area," he said. Construction is to begin in the autumn.

Staff at the Ringaskiddy plant with share options have seen their holdings soar in value following the drug's success in the US. The shares have jumped 30 per cent in price from \$88 to \$115 since Viagra's launch in April.

ALAN MURDOCH

'I feel so sorry for the killers of my son'

FOR Neville and Doreen Lawrence, the public inquiry has been a kind of catharsis. Now, perhaps, they can finally start to grieve.

For the past five years, from the moment that Stephen was murdered, they craved information. How did it happen, who did it, why did it take so long to make arrests?

Why did the Crown Prosecution Service drop the case? Why were five violent racists free to walk the streets when their beloved and gifted son was dead and buried in Jamaica, the only place where they could be sure that his grave was safe from vandals?

As the evidence was completed this week after 55 days, Mr Lawrence said that the inquiry - for which the family fought long and hard - had, to a large extent, achieved what they had hoped.

"It has given us answers to some of the questions that we've been asking for so long," he said. "It has filled in the blank spaces."

At the same time, the inquiry has been a grueling experience for the couple. Neville, who is unemployed, attended every day; Doreen, a university welfare officer, went as often as she could. They sat at the front of the room, dignified, silent figures.

"I couldn't believe some of the things I was hearing," Mr Lawrence said. "They [the youths he believes are responsible for his son's death] were sitting there in the witness box saying that they didn't know this and they couldn't remember that. I found it very distressing; sometimes I just wanted to shout out."

"I always thought that the British police was one of the best in the world. I felt that because there were so many people involved in the killing, it wouldn't take them very long to find out who it was, I said to myself as long as they find one

BY KATHY MARKS

person, they'll find the rest easily."

At times, listening to the evidence about the botched police investigation was intolerable. When Mr Lawrence could take no more, he would leave the room to recover his composure.

It has been a long road to here. Three police investigations, a rare private prosecution, a lengthy inquest, a review by the Police Complaints Authority and the four-month public inquiry.

The strain of it all shows. Mr Lawrence is visibly greyer; his wife is a coiled spring of tension.

'It has given us answers to some of the questions that we've been asking for so long. It has filled in the blank spaces'

They both look exhausted. They say that their religious faith and their two other children - Stuart, 21, a graphic design student, and Georgina, 16, who has a place at art college - help to keep them going.

Friends and relatives who set up the Stephen Lawrence Family Campaign remain another important source of support.

The inquiry has done nothing to build bridges between the couple and the police. They are convinced their relationship got off to such a disastrous start because officers were not accustomed to the concept of a respectable black family.

Police seemed more interested in investigating Stephen's background than in finding his killers, they believe. "My son was black, so he must be a criminal," Mrs Lawrence has said. They themselves were treated by officers as "gullible simpletons". After the failure of the pri-

vate prosecution, the public inquiry was "the next best thing", Mr Lawrence said this week, "a way of trying to deal with the whole situation by getting answers".

It's a poor second best, though. More than anything in the world, the Lawrences would like to see the five youths behind bars, and there is little realistic chance of that happening.

Three of them - Neil Acourt, Luke Knight and Gary Dobson - were formally cleared of the murder at the end of the private prosecution.

The other two - Jamie Acourt and David Norris - are unlikely to be prosecuted even if new evidence is found, because they would argue that publicity has deprived them of the chance of a fair trial.

It is possible that some of them could face criminal proceedings for perjury on the basis of their evidence to the public inquiry. Sir William Macpherson, the inquiry chairman, has not yet decided whether to refer the transcripts to police.

Civil action against them is another avenue that remains to be explored.

Mr Lawrence is remarkably charitable in his view of the five people widely regarded as Stephen's killers. "I feel sorry for them because I feel that they don't know any better," he said.

"They were brought up that way. They don't know right from wrong. I teach my kids right from wrong, not to do certain things."

Looking back on the past five years, he says he has changed beyond measure. "I don't recognise myself," he said. "Some of the things that I'm doing now, I didn't know I'd be able to do them."

"At the same time, it is something I have to do, to get to the bottom of what happened to my son."



Neville Lawrence passes a poster of his son, Stephen, on his way into the public inquiry yesterday. Mykel Nicolhou

TIMETABLE OF EVENTS

24 March: Edmund Lawson QC, counsel to the inquiry, opens the hearings with a statement describing the police inquiry as "seriously flawed".
30 March: Neville Lawrence says in a statement that he was told by a visitor to his house that the suspects were seen washing blood off themselves on the night of the murder.
6 May: Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for the family, alleges there was a corrupt link between a police officer and Clifford Norris, a notorious criminal and father of one of the five suspects.
13 May: Ian Crampton, who led the initial investigation, admits that he should have made arrests within 48 hours.
14 May: The suspects announce that they plan to seek leave to apply for judicial review of the decision to call them to give evidence at the inquiry.
15 May: Duwayne Brooks, who was with Stephen when he was murdered, tells the inquiry: "Racist thugs killed Steve and shattered my life."
27 May: Brian Weeden, head of the murder squad for 14 months, admits that until recently he did not understand the legal grounds on which police can make arrests.
11 June: Neville and Doreen Lawrence give evidence. Mrs Lawrence interrupts questioning by a barrister for the Metropolitan Police, asking: "Am I on trial?"
12 June: The High Court grants the suspects leave to apply for judicial review.
15 June: Inquiry watches a videotape recorded by a secret police camera hidden in the flat of one of the suspects, showing them brandishing knives and expressing violent racist views.
17 June: Speaking through a high-ranking officer, Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner, apologises to the family for the first time for the incompetence of the investigation.
18 June: Lord Justice Simon Brown dismisses the judicial review application, but says the five may not be asked whether they killed Stephen.
23 June: The Met denies making a systematic attempt to coach officers giving evidence to the inquiry.
29 June: The suspects' appearance is marked by violent scenes inside and out the inquiry as Nation of Islam activists attempt to enter the building and force the hearing to be adjourned for four hours.
30 June: The suspects are pelted with bottles after evidence and implausible evidence.
1 July: A senior Crown Prosecution Service lawyer accuses the Lawrences of wrecking future prospects of their son's killers being brought to justice.
16 July: Commander Raymond Adams, who went on permanent sick leave shortly after becoming involved in the investigation, tells the inquiry that he was not corrupt.

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In a prison cell, the man overshadowing the case

FOR SIX years, Clifford Norris led an apparently charmed life. Wanted for drug smuggling, suspected of murder, he slipped effortlessly in and out of the country, idling away his time on the beach in Australia and on the golf courses of the Sussex coast.

Police, it seemed, were powerless to apprehend him, even when it became clear that he was highlighting the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation - in which his son, David, was a prime suspect - by spreading fear among teenage witnesses.

Then, in 1994, a year after Stephen was killed, his luck changed. A new senior detective, Bill Mellish, took charge of the Lawrence case, and decided that it was time to sort out the Norris problem once and for all. Within two months, Clifford was behind bars.

It had not required the skills of a Maigret. Mr Mellish's team rummaged through a dustbin outside Norris's home and found a birthday card addressed to his wife, Teresa. Having established that he was in Britain, they tailed Mrs Norris to a holiday cottage near Battle, in East Sussex. When Clifford emerged for breakfast at a local cafe the following morning, they pounced.

How did a violent and ruthless professional gangster manage to remain on the run for so

BY KATHY MARKS

long? This is one of the unanswered questions that fuels the conspiracy theorists, who believe that Norris - long in cahoots with corrupt police officers, they say - offered bribes to botch the Lawrence inquiry so that his son and the others went free.

On the face of it, the proposition is plausible enough. Norris, thanks to the drugs trade, had plenty of money to line police officers' pockets. He also had a track record of using bribery to interfere with the course of justice.

Just a few weeks before Stephen was killed, a white youth, Stacey Benefield, was stabbed in the same area. He named his assailant as David Norris, who was duly arrested.

A week later, Clifford approached Benefield with £2,000 in cash and the promise of £3,000 more if he changed his story. The trial went ahead and David was acquitted amid allegations of jury tampering.

Clifford had good reason to try to sabotage the Lawrence murder investigation. This time, not only his son would benefit, David's co-defendants included Jamie and Neil Acourt, whose five uncles, the Stuart brothers, were criminal associates of Clifford. Another

suspect was Luke Knight, unrelated to Norris, but nephew of Ronnie, the former East End gangster.

How far Norris's tentacles of influence extended into the Metropolitan Police is hard to ascertain. What has emerged is that he had a relationship with at least one officer, Detective Sergeant David Coles, of the Flying Squad.

Undercover Customs officers were keeping an eye on Norris in the late 1980s because he was suspected of involvement in the importation of a quarter of a ton of cannabis. During that period, they observed three meetings between Norris and Coles in the Tiger's Head pub in Chislehurst, Kent.

At one meeting, Coles was seen making notes and using a calculator. Norris was seen passing him a carrier bag. The day after their third encounter, in June 1988, Norris and his brother, Alexander, went on the run, evading arrest in a big Customs swoop.

Coles told a police disciplinary inquiry that he had been cultivating Norris as an informant. Investigators concluded that there was "a much closer relationship than Coles was prepared to admit to". He was disciplined for a separate matter and dismissed, but reinstated at a lower rank on appeal.

So far, so intriguing. What were Coles' links, though, to the Lawrence murder squad? Firstly, it transpires, he had served in the past under Ian Crampton, the detective superintendent who led the investigation for the first three days. Det Supt Crampton wrote Coles a laudatory character reference for the disciplinary inquiry.

Secondly, in what was, at the very least, a bizarre twist of fate, Coles was one of the officers assigned to guard Duwayne Brooks, the principal witness to Stephen's murder, when he gave evidence at the Old Bailey in the ill-fated private prosecution.

All the senior detectives have denied collusion with Norris. Most, despite long periods working in south-east London, say they had never heard of him in 1993. DS Crampton says the name David Norris "rang no bells" when it came up in tip-offs to the incident room - although he himself was, by a remarkable coincidence, involved in the case of a contract killing of a police informant called David Norris, no relation.

The picture remains tantalisingly inconclusive. Sitting in his prison cell, mid-way through an eight-year sentence, Clifford Norris must be relishing his new-found notoriety. As far as the Lawrence case is concerned, he is the spectre at the feast.

'I should've been firmer with police'

THE LAWYER representing the parents of Stephen Lawrence yesterday told the public inquiry into the black teenager's murder that he regretted not being firmer with the police.

Imran Khan, a solicitor, had been accused by several officers involved in the murder case of hindering their efforts to catch the killers by his persistent demands on behalf of the

BY SIMEON TEGEL

Lawrence family for information about the progress of the murder hunt.

Mr Khan was asked by Sonia Woodley QC, who represents three senior policemen involved in the case, whether he had any regrets over his dealings with the Lawrence family. To laughter from the public gallery, Mr

Khan replied: "Perhaps I was not as firm as I should have been with the police."

Mr Khan began to act for Stephen, a black A-level student, was killed by a gang of white racists at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London, in April, 1993.

He raised the issue of the family's dissatisfaction over police liaison with senior officers heading the murder

hunt. He also sent letters, which received no replies, demanding to know whether any suspects had been identified, arrested or charged.

Mr Khan is the 88th and final witness to give evidence to the public inquiry into the police failure to bring Stephen's killers to justice. He was giving evidence on the 55th day of the inquiry, which ended its first crucial stage yesterday.

صكيات الامم

How the police murdered justice



David Norris (centre back), Jamie Acourt (second right), and Gary Dobson (back right) running the gauntlet of an angry crowd after giving evidence to the public inquiry last month. Paul Hackett/Reuters

No radios, no first aid, and no idea

IT WAS a brutal and nasty murder, but it was hardly the most complex of cases to crack. A young man was stabbed at 10.30pm, on a well-lit main street, in view of three people at a bus stop. The victim's friend witnessed the attack from close at hand. The motive was clear: racism, pure and simple.

The prime suspects were a gift, in the hands of a smart bunch of CID officers. They were teenagers, they lived locally and they bragged about the killing. They had a track record as violent racists and, crucially, there were five of them. Five chances that one of them might slip up, or buckle under pressure. Five routes to the heart of the crime.

Police did not solve Stephen Lawrence's murder, and had his parents been less stubborn, that might have been the end of it. The official version of events - that the evidence was just not strong enough to nail the killers - would probably never have been contested.

The public inquiry was the family's last chance to learn the truth and, for once, the system did not let them down. The inquiry has peeled away the layers of secrecy surrounding their son's death and subjected the murder investigation to merciless scrutiny.

As the evidence tumbled out, a picture emerged of staggering incompetence at every level of the police force, from the constables who failed to pursue the gang on the first night, through the superintendents who put off making arrests for two weeks, to the assistant commissioner who assured the Lawrences that everything was going just fine behind the scenes.

So many opportunities were missed, so much vital information was ignored that the question is begged whether ineptitude alone can adequately explain it. The family's lawyers argued that darker forces must have been at play: racism, or corruption, or both.

The inquiry team may well decide that the corruption case remains unproven. But to the consternation of the Metropolitan Police, it is certain to conclude that racism undermined the conduct of the investigation.

Police detect this charge: it sticks in their gullets. But their response to Stephen's murder, in April 1993, is a depressing reminder that, despite all the high-minded policy initiatives on race, on the streets little has changed.

Racism and incompetence are the two threads running through this story. Both are visible from the moment that police arrived at the crime scene to find one young black man lying on the ground in an agitated state and another unconscious and bleeding on the pavement.

Whatever their reasons, officers did not see fit to administer first aid to Stephen - prompting Doreen Lawrence to suggest later that they "did not want to dirty their hands with a black man's blood". In fact, police barely touched Stephen, failing even to establish that he had been stabbed, or to locate his wound.

Meanwhile, his friend, Duwayne Brooks, pointed out the direction in which the youths had fled just 15 minutes earlier. No one acted on this information.

BY KATHY MARKS

Two Territorial Support Group units arrived, but their supervising officer, Inspector Stephen Groves, thought it more fruitful to make inquiries in a pub than to knock on doors of nearby houses. "A pub is an absolute mine of information," he explained to the inquiry.

The way police reacted to Duwayne is illuminating. This was an 18-year-old whose close friend had just been attacked and was probably dying. There was no human kindness in the way he was treated. No one asked him if he was injured. Officers were aloof and suspicious, sceptical of his account of events.

Constable Linda Bethel asked if he had any weapons. Insp Groves wondered whether Duwayne - alone of all the civilians at the scene, the rest of whom were white - might be the guilty party. "It would be wrong for me to make assumptions, absolutely wrong," he told the inquiry. "The fact that Duwayne Brooks is there, yes, he may be a suspect."

Fifty-seven officers were called to the scene in Eltham, south-east London, but it was not a productive night's policing.



Stephen: Got "double dose of racism"

Nevertheless, the senior investigating officer, Detective Superintendent Ian Crampton, had ample grounds to arrest the suspects within two days, thanks to a flood of telephone calls to the incident room identifying Jamie and Neil Acourt, David Norris, Luke Knight and Gary Dobson as the killers. Detailed information was also supplied by a skinhead who was close to the gang and was known to police as a reliable informant.

Why did police not move in swiftly, maximising the chances of finding forensic evidence and enabling identification parades to be held while memories were fresh? Poor judgement alone was not to blame. Detective Superintendent Brian Weeden, who took over from Det Supt Crampton after three days, had such a shaky grasp of the law that he thought he needed hard evidence in order to arrest.

While senior detectives procrastinated, surveillance officers watched as binliners of clothing were removed from the Acourts' home. They were powerless to alert the murder squad because they had no radios or mobile telephones.

That still left several potential witnesses who might help to build a case against the five youths. They needed careful handling. They were teenagers who lived on the same council estate as the alleged killers; they were vulnerable and anxious.

Detective Sergeant John Davidson, a tough, middle-aged Scot, was the officer dispatched to win their confidence. Most of them refused to co-operate; some of their parents threatened to sue him for "harassment".

When the youths were finally arrested, most invoked their right to silence. Jamie Acourt's interview lasted seven minutes.

Given this lamentable sequence of events, it seems hardly surprising that the Crown Prosecution Service dropped the case in July, two months later. The CPS cited lack of evidence: it was evidential problems, too, that caused the collapse of the private prosecution mounted by the Lawrences in 1996.

At the public inquiry the evidence alone was shocking enough. But the police officers themselves - 65 of them testified - were deeply unimpressive witnesses who reinforced the image of shambolic inertia.

A less glowing advertisement for the Met's claim to serve all communities equally would be difficult to find. There was not a single black officer among them. Six of them refused to accept that Stephen's murder was racially motivated. Many, after long spells working in areas with large black populations, were unaware that "coloured" is an offensive term.

The gulf between policy and practice was dramatically illustrated by Assistant Commissioner Ian Johnston, the second most senior policeman in London, who minutes after declaring that the force aspired to the most exacting standards of racial awareness, stated that districts with high crime rates were often populated by "coloured people".

It seems hard to believe, given the number of serious flaws in the murder inquiry, that senior officers all the way up to Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner, continued to defend it until last December, when the Police Complaints Authority published a damning report.

This culture of closing ranks and covering up mistakes has been powerfully exposed by the public inquiry. Even when an internal review of the Lawrence case was carried out by the Met's finest, the end product was a whitewash. The review was approved by Sir Paul and cited as proof that there was no substance to the family's complaints.

It was only a few weeks ago that the Met finally apologised to the family. Until then, rather than accept that it was its fault that the killers were still at large, it blamed everyone but itself.

What has emerged from the public inquiry is that Stephen received a double dose of racism: killed because of the colour of his skin and then let down by a criminal justice system that at a subliminal level holds black life cheap. This most seminal of cases has forced people to confront the racial tensions that still scar British society and exposed a crisis of confidence in the police, particularly among the black population.

There is thus a huge weight of responsibility on the shoulders of Sir William Macpherson, the inquiry chairman, to heal divisions and satisfy the yearning for justice of the Lawrence family and the wider community.

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Chinese dissidents push for new party

BY STEPHEN VINES
in Hong Kong

CHINA'S EMBATTLED human rights movement, frequently written off as dying, is showing fresh signs of life in the wake of President Bill Clinton's recent visit. A group of 100 dissidents from 19 provinces has joined forces to protest over the arrest of nine activists who were detained for trying to establish an organisation called the Chinese Democracy Party.

The significance of the letter sent to President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji is the nationwide spread of the signatories. Most human rights protests in China are highly localised.

It seems that the dissidents have been emboldened by the Clinton visit which gave rise to an unprecedented public debate on human rights issues.

In their letter to the Chinese leadership, the dissidents note President Jiang's promise to sign the United Nations Convention on Civil and Political Rights. The convention guarantees the right of peaceful political expression.

The founders of the still obscure Chinese Democracy Party had pointed to their rights under the Chinese constitution to establish a political party. This right has never been tested during five decades of Communist rule.

Nine party members were arrested, although five were subsequently released. "We are surprised to learn that nine dissidents were detained on the pretext they threatened state security," said the letter from the campaigners.

It also stated that the arrests were "against the Chinese government's promises to improve human rights and promote democracy".

The United States has also protested over the arrests which were seen by critics of the Clinton visit to China as a sign that the government in Peking had shrugged off Mr Clinton's repeated calls for human rights and a more open political system.

Mike McCurry, the US President's spokesman, said: "It reminds us how important it is to continue to press the case for human rights, exactly as the President did when he was in China."

Tang Guoqing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, described those arrested as people who "are actually criminals who violated Chinese laws". He refused to speculate on whether those still in detention would be released.

The speedy arrests of the opposition party members contrast with reports of a much more open atmosphere in China, allowing a far higher degree of debate than at any time since the 1989 crackdown on the democracy movement.

A Western academic who was recently at Peking University, said that "practically everything is open for debate these days. You can talk about anything and, much to my surprise, both students and teachers were keen to do so".

President Jiang has recently laid greater stress on imposing the rule of law in China, although he has not suggested that this would mean enlarging the scope of civil liberties.

China has successfully decapitated the leadership of the dissident movement by sending leaders into jail or exile.

As the organisation of this nationwide letter shows, however, the dissident movement consistently proves its ability to reinvent itself, albeit on a relatively small scale.



Oscar Motuloh/AP

Independence hopes for E Timor

AN EAST Timorese man at Indonesian-organised celebrations for "Integration Day" in the capital, Dili, yesterday—the anniversary of the annexation of the former Portuguese colony in 1976 by Jakarta. Hundreds of troops patrolled Dili but there was no recurrence of the violence last month in which three people died.

But in London, a leading member of the East Timorese opposition was optimistic about the prospect of change, including possible independence—which East Timorese have been demanding for 22 years, writes Steve Crawshaw. Fernando de Araujo, recently released after six years in jail, talked of "growing interna-

tional interest and concern", and said: "The people in East Timor are preparing themselves for new moves on some kind of a solution. People are opening themselves up to new ideas."

Mr de Araujo, leader of the main East Timorese student resistance group, insisted, however, that Indonesian talk in

recent months of a special status for the territory, without full independence, was unacceptable — "political rhetoric".

At the formal anniversary ceremony in Dili, the governor of the territory talked of East Timor as "an inseparable part of the Republic of Indonesia". But few East Timorese attended the ceremony.

White House guards must give evidence

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

IN A SETBACK for President Clinton the US Supreme Court ruled yesterday that his bodyguards must testify in the Monica Lewinsky case, ending White House hopes that their evidence could at least be delayed. The ruling was a defeat for Mr Clinton, but also for the Justice Department and the Secret Service, which had argued strongly against any court appearance by members of the presidential security detail.

By the time the court issued its unqualified ruling, shortly before the midday deadline, the agents were already at the Washington DC court. The independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, had anticipated victory by instructing them to present themselves at midday, ready to testify.

The decision aggravated what was already a highly acrimonious stand-off between the prosecutor's office and the White House. At issue was whether Secret Service agents should be required to give evidence about the conduct of the man they are responsible for guarding. Mr Starr said they should; the Justice Department and the White House, said they should not.

A lawyer acting for the Secret Service had earlier disclosed that the seven agents under court subpoena, who include Mr Clinton's chief bodyguard, Larry Cockell, had been temporarily transferred to other duties. That was said to be at Mr Cockell's suggestion. "He felt he could not protect the President if he can't be totally focused on his job," said the lawyer, John Kotelly.

Identifying the principle at stake, Mr Kotelly said of the agents: "They should not be used as observation posts for a prosecutor who is clearly on a fishing expedition."

Mr Starr says the agents are key witnesses in the case he is trying to build against the President. Mr Clinton is accused of lying under oath when he denied having an affair with Ms

Lewinsky, a former White House trainee, and of putting pressure on her to deny it too. The accusations lay him open to criminal charges of perjury and obstruction of justice — and, although public opinion is strongly against this outcome — to possible impeachment.

Addressing the row about the Secret Service publicly for the first time yesterday, shortly before the court ruled, Mr Clinton said it would be "completely inappropriate for me to be involved". The decision to contest the summonses, he said, "came out of the Secret Service... Their job is to protect me in a professional way, not a political way." He went out



Starr: Anticipated victory

of his way to deny that he or the White House was "waging war" on the independent prosecutor. Responding to a lower court ruling published on Thursday which included an accusation from one judge that "the President's agents literally and figuratively have declared war on the independent counsel", Mr Clinton said: "You have to consider the source. In that comment, that is simply not true." That judge, Lawrence Silberman, is a Republican appointee.

The bodyguards must now testify, or face charges for contempt. The contribution they can make to the investigation is not clear, however. According to some familiar with Secret Service duties, they would not have been in a position to monitor all the President's activities in private areas of the White House.

Deal on world war-crimes court leaves US isolated

AFTER FIVE weeks of draining negotiations, a historic statute for a permanent world court to try genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity seemed on the verge of adoption last night, despite continuing objections from the United States.

Barring last-minute surprises, the document is due to be signed at an elaborate ceremony on the Capitol Hill in Rome — climax of a United Nations conference attended by delegations from 160 countries. But while the compromise that finally emerged yesterday had overwhelming backing, it failed to meet two key conditions laid down by Washington. In addition, Russia and China had misgiv-

ings while India still hoped to have the use of nuclear weapons classified as a war crime.

The US was due to set out its position on the proposed treaty in the final session of the conference before its midnight deadline. "Unfortunately, the draft treaty does not address American concerns over the court's jurisdiction and the role of the prosecutor," a US spokesman said, referring to the country's demand for cast-iron guarantees that American soldiers abroad would not find themselves under indictment.

But a vast majority of countries, including Britain, argued

that such an "opt-out" clause would render the court impotent. As the hours ticked away the chief US delegate, David Scheffer, was virtually isolated — his best hope an adjournment of proceedings to allow more time for a deal to be reached.

Under the final proposal, the court's prosecutors will be able to bring indictments on their own, subject to a final go-ahead from a panel of judges. Although a limited opt-out has been inserted for war crimes, the possibility remains that US personnel could be arraigned before the court, irrespective of whether Washington signs up to the treaty.

The "take-it-or-leave-it" deal

on offer last night was thus a compromise, promising a court less independent than human rights groups would have wished, but not quite the toothless creature they at one point feared might emerge.

A major worry is the "consent" requirement, that either the state where the crimes took place or the state of nationality of the accused must approve a case before it goes ahead. "In most cases these will be the same," the campaign group Human Rights Watch said. In that case, it would be virtually impossible to bring to justice a Saddam Hussein or Pol Pot, whose crimes were against their own people.

IN BRIEF

Judge prepares to charge Bhutto in money-laundering case

A JUDGE in Geneva has indicted the husband of the former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto on money-laundering charges and is preparing to charge Ms Bhutto. The charging of her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, by Judge Daniel Devaud follows the indictment in June of three Swiss citizens linked to Ms Bhutto, dismissed in November 1996 on charges of corruption and misuse. Zardari has been jailed since her dismissal.

Spanish king 'could be Eta target'

SPAIN'S INTERIOR minister, Jaime Mayor Oreja, has warned that the Basque separatist organisation Eta could shortly mount a serious counterattack in retaliation for the decision this week to ban the pro-Eta newspaper Egin and imprison 11 of its directors. Mr Mayor Oreja said he did not discount the possibility that King Juan Carlos or the Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, could be targeted.

Police seek Internet paedophiles

A TEAM of 15 investigators was yesterday scanning computer disks believed to contain thousands of digital photographs and videos of child pornography as they sought to trace a Dutch-based paedophile ring. The disks were found in the apartment of German-born Gerrit Ulrich who was murdered in Italy last month. Police suspect the pornography was distributed worldwide via the Internet.

Ex-dictator under house arrest

JORGE RAFAEL VIDELA, the former dictator facing prosecution for kidnapping children of dissidents during Argentina's "dirty war", has been put under house arrest under a law allowing prisoners over 70 to be detained at home. Videla, 72, was a member of the military junta which came to power in a 1976 coup.

Chewing gum loses its flavour

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

THE GUM-chewing, Coke-swilling, blue-jeaned loudmouth that is the common stereotype of the all-American teenager is losing one of its most distinguishing characteristics. Believe it or not, chewing gum is going out of fashion.

An impression gained from the streets — that young Americans are no longer trying to perform the legendary feat of talking and chewing gum at the same time — is confirmed by the figures. Sales of regular chewing gum in the United States have fallen by almost 5 per cent in the past year, and sales of sugar-free gum also declined.

The biggest loser was bubble-gum, with one of the largest manufacturers, Arm & Hammer, registering a 37 per cent drop in sales.

Gum-makers, according to a survey in USA Today newspaper, are turning to the older section of the market and trying to convince customers that gum is good for them. There's a

caffeine-boosted gum, fresh-taste gum to mask your socially unacceptable smoking habit, gums that boast dental benefits, a slimmer gum and vitamin gums designed for the health-food market.

Some of the new brands have achieved big increases in sales, but not enough by far to compensate for the decline.

That is because all their best efforts are still failing to bring back the children and teenagers. The young, apparently, now find gum "boring", preferring chewy sweets, soft drinks and snacks. Gum-makers blame in part the big advertising budgets of the food and drink giants for their more fashionable image: today's accessory of choice for the young-about-town is a plastic bottle of some over-sweetened fizzy water or a beaker of "designer" coffee, not gum.

With the domestic market in seemingly irreversible decline, US gum manufacturers are reportedly focusing on the potential for expansion abroad. You have been warned.

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مكتبة الامم

Russia lays age of blood to rest

PAINFULLY, reluctantly, and at the eleventh hour, Russia has finally confronted an abcess in its past that has festered unintended for 80 years - the murder not only of a repressive tsar and his wife but also of his daughters, and members of his household.

After seven years of bagging, political posturing, and unresolved ecclesiastical disputes over their bones, the Romanovs were hurried yesterday in a ceremony that - despite many unpromising omens - was sombre and dignified.

The event, in the former imperial capital of St Petersburg, thus acquired a place in history by categorically expressing remorse for an episode that was for years celebrated as an act of heroism by the Soviet Union, but which much of Russia has long found uncomfortable.

The man who improbably engineered this achievement was Boris Yeltsin, whose last-minute decision to attend the burial, despite the absence of the leader of Russian Orthodoxy, saved it from being an embarrassing fudge, even a farce.

The President swept into St Petersburg with his wife, Naina, both in mourners' black, and took centre stage at the service, held in the 18th-century St Peter and St Paul Cathedral - the same River Neva island which the Bolsheviks used to launch their decisive attack on the Winter Palace in 1917, plunging the country into Communism, famine and terror.

Addressing a congregation packed with some 50 relatives from the dynasty and four dozen ambassadors, Mr Yeltsin described the Romanovs' murder as a "monstrous crime" - "one of the most shameful pages in our history". Their burial was "an act of human justice,

By PHIL REEVES
in St Petersburg

a symbol of unification in Russia and redemption of common guilt." The 20th century, "an age of blood and violence in Russia", must end with "repentance and peace, regardless of political views, and ethnic and political identity".

And - in remarks that are particularly resonant in this unstable land - he declared the use of violence "doomed". He then bowed his head before the coffins. Earlier, when the nine small oak coffins were carried into the gilded cathedral, a large part of the Romanov relatives spontaneously fell to their knees, some weeping.

Nicholas and Alexandra and their daughters Olga, Tatiana and Anastasia were lowered into a single side-chapel crypt, lying above the coffins of the family doctor, maid, valet and cook. The mourners - among them Prince Michael of Kent - filed silently past, crossing themselves and reaching out to touch the white marble covering. Outside, in sunshine, stood some 500 onlookers, including Alexander Shuridin, a mustachioed Cossack in full dress uniform. Clutching a candle in one hand, and his peaked khaki hat in the other, he said, tearfully: "For the first time in years, Mr Yeltsin looks like the same man who stood on the barricades in 1991." Mr Yeltsin was not unaided in his mission to inject meaning into this burial, which has restored the Romanovs to the same building that holds their ancestors, including Peter the Great.

Russia's national television news-readers wore black yesterday, and gave prominence to the coverage. One of the major channels, NTV, accompanied



Women with tsarist portraits (left): Nicholas II and the British representative, General Williams, in 1915; and soldiers carrying Nicholas's coffin (above) Reuters

bulletins with emotive pictures of all four of the Romanov daughters - who many Russians concede were innocent victims, far removed from the blunders of their autocratic parents.

Mr Yeltsin's performance yesterday wrong-footed most of his rivals. The ambitious Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, who decided to boycott the service, was left to preside over ill-timed, costly, Soviet-style youth games in the capital.

Alexander Lebed, another pretender, came to the service but was squeezed from the limelight, despite moving through the crowd outside sign-

ing his autograph and thundering to the cameras about how the event could so easily have been a farce.

Yet the President could not eradicate the conflicts that underlie this event, that will burn on malignly.

As a 19-gun salute echoed across the palace rooftops and canals of St Petersburg as Nicholas II was lowered into his tomb, Arch-Priest Pavel Krasnotsvetov was in nearby Kazan Cathedral completing a litany commemorating the Romanovs, one of hundreds held in Orthodox churches across Russia. He defended his Patri-

arch, Alexy II, who - indefeasibly - has placed his desire to heal internal divisions in his church over the authenticity of the bones before his obligation to unify the country.

Accompanied by a splinter group of the imperial family, the patriarch held a rival service yesterday at Sergiev Posad, outside Moscow. "We don't know if these are genuine remains, because we don't know where the DNA came from," said Arch-Priest Krasnotsvetov. "Maybe it was from the KGB."

But for those who look past, they were real enough. "This was a real Christian burial,"

You could almost grasp it with your hands," said Ernst-Jorg von Stauditz, Germany's ambassador, at a post-burial lunch for the guests, where several hundred mourners quaffed vodka and Moldovan red wine in the State Museum of Ethnology for the People of the USSR.

Prince Michael of Kent - the only British royal to attend, although the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are both relatives of the Romanovs - was said by his spokesman to have found the ceremony "pleasing and dignified." Similar sentiments were echoed by Britain's

ambassador to Russia, and its official representative at yesterday's service, Sir Andrew Wood.

It would be wrong to say that Russia has been unified by this event. It did not grip all the country, where it was a normal working day.

Even in St Petersburg the main thoroughfare, Nevski Prospekt, was teeming with traders and shoppers during the burial.

There will be more wrangling over the bones, including the remains of the two missing Romanovs - Nicholas's son Alexei and daughter Marie.

The governor of Sverdlovsk, Eduard Rossel, claims to have "serious information" about their whereabouts. But at least some seemed surprised by the impact of yesterday's events, and by the emotions they aroused. They may just heed the words of Nikolai Romanov, the most senior relative, after the service. Asked by *The Independent* if the arguments over his ill-fated ancestors are now over, he replied cautiously: "We will see. But today we have buried a most difficult part of Russia's past. We have now to think of the future. Russia must now look forward."

Paris rings with praises as Assad comes to town

WHEN THE guests rose to the music of Chopin, a Syrian woman in her white scarf at the front of the great Salle des Fêtes began a high scream of greeting to President Hafez el-Assad. Her ululations took the security men off guard. So, too, did the Arab chorus that followed, echoing down the *escalier d'honneur* where the Garde Républicaine stood to attention, swords drawn. "With our souls, with our blood, we sacrifice ourselves for you," the Syrian guests chanted at their leader. Never before, amid the Belle Époque statuary and painted, candelabra-dripping ceilings, had the Paris Hotel de Ville witnessed anything like this. The Bath Party had come to town.

For 10 minutes, Mr Assad had sat, head bowed, his large, thick-rimmed spectacles perched on his nose, reading the Arabic text of Jean Tiberi's speech, as the Mayor of Paris praised "one of the Middle East's most influential lead-

By ROBERT FISK
in Paris

ers" for his "distinguished role" in international affairs, his pragmatism, his experience and determination, his "brilliant career as a fighter pilot", the stability he had given his country. There seemed no end to all this. Nor was there. Had Jacques Chirac written this speech, one wondered, as Mr Tiberi went on to explain how Syria - thanks to Mr Assad, of course - had persuaded the world to recognise the country's pivotal place in Middle East peace-making?

High above the two men, a 19th-century roof-painting of a Muslim woman in a white scarf looked down upon them. Beside her head was written in gold the word "Algeria". But France's colonial history was not on the agenda yesterday. Instead, Mr Tiberi invoked another dynasty: the Roman emperor Alexander Severus and Elagabal

came from Syria, he said. So did the apostles Paul and Luke.

Mr Assad was almost as rhetorical. He congratulated France on winning the World Cup so close to Bastille Day and - after reminding his hosts that Syria had been "enriching human civilisation since the dawn of history", insisted that his people shared the very same principles of equality that were enshrined in the French Revolution.

Were France and Syria really so similar, one kept asking oneself? True, the French Revolution was a very bloody affair. True, Arab leaders have been known to compare themselves to Napoleon Bonaparte. But who was Robespierre in this unhappy analogy? Who was Marat? Or should we have been thinking of revolutionary France's desire to free countries living under occupation? Did not Mr Tiberi talk about "a peace with justice and security for all nations in the Middle

East"? Had he not just promised Mr Assad that "France is ready to walk beside Syria on the path of peace"?

Indeed he had. President Chirac had gone further a few hours earlier, demanding land-for-peace in the Middle East, the return of the Golan Heights to Syria and the empowerment of Palestinians as envisaged in the Oslo accords. France is playing hard for a new European role in the Middle East - led by France - and Mr Assad wants Europe to balance the pro-Israeli United States in helping the Arabs - led by Syria.

How the Americans must hate this. How the Israelis must loathe the pageantry laid out by the French for the one Arab neighbour who has held out for the return of all his land before peace. Perhaps this is the price both must pay for allowing Oslo to die. As the Israelis used to say when they retreated from Lebanon, a vacuum will always be filled.

Israelis 'backed arms sales to Iran'

IN EARLY 1993, Hezbollah, the Lebanese guerrilla group, fired mortars at Israeli soldiers in the occupied zone in south Lebanon. Soon afterwards the Israeli army reported to Itzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, that the mortars used were Israeli, manufactured by Soltam, a company which had sold the mortars to Iran years before and the Iranians had evidently passed them on to Hezbollah.

Not surprisingly, Nahum Mahor, given 16 years' jail this week for supplying chemical weapons to Iran, continues to protest that he was not alone in supplying Israeli weapons to the Iranians. His wife, Francine, said: "I ask myself why my husband was the only one accused. Israel wasn't selling only hummus and pita bread to Iran."

By PATRICK COCKBURN
in Jerusalem

early days of the Iran-Iraq war Israel sold arms to Iran. In 1984, an Iranian pilot in an F4 Phantom bought by Iran under the Shah defected to Saudi Arabia. His plane was found to contain spare parts shipped to Israel from the United States. Israel saw Iran as a counter-weight to Iraq. Sales continued after the war ended. Iran had suffered heavy casualties from Iraq's extensive use of chemical weapons, such as mustard gas and nerve gases like sarin and tabun. Many Israeli contractors were interested in meeting Iranian defence needs in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Steve Rodan, an Israeli journalist specialising in defence, writing on the background to the Manbar affair in the *Jerusalem*



Nahum Manbar: Accused

Post yesterday, said the Israeli company Elbit "tried to interest Iran in purchasing equipment that would detect chemical weapons in a \$50m deal via Poland." He said deals with Iran were with the permission of the defence ministry's Sibat arms export agency.

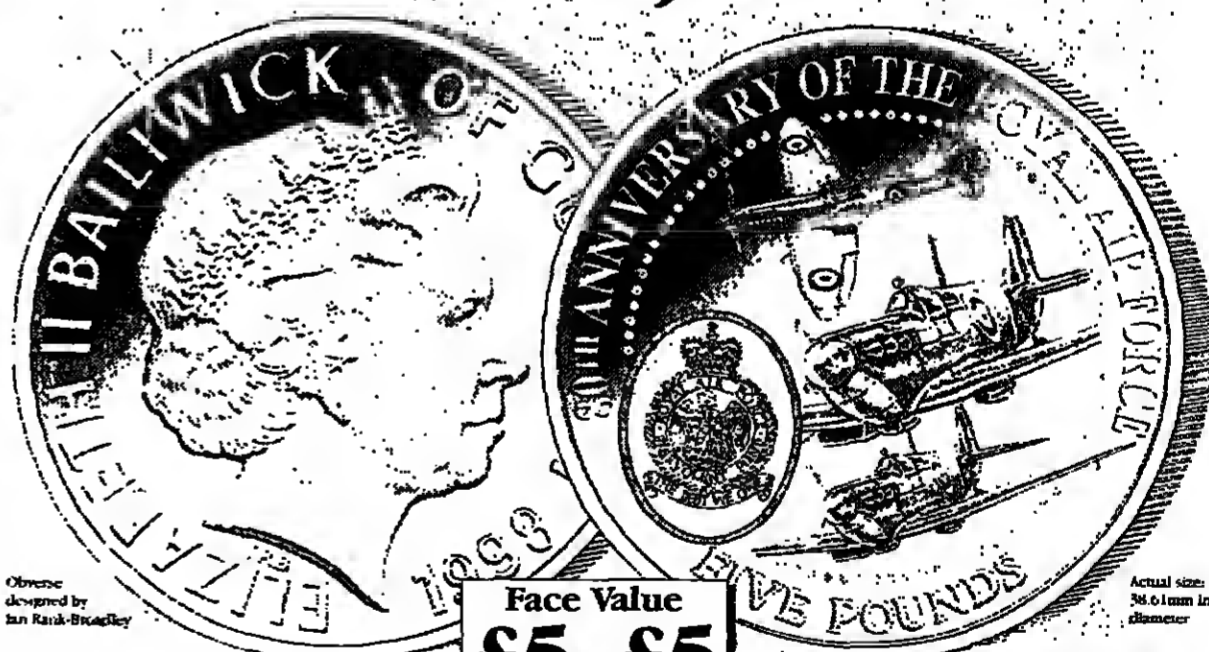
Why then has Manbar ended up in prison as a traitor when

others are enjoying the profits they made in trading with Iran?

He had an unsuccessful business career in Israel. He left for France in 1968. In the early 1980s he began to supply gas masks and other defensive equipment. From 1983, he was also supplying Iran with the means to make mustard gas and nerve gases.

From 1981, he was supplying the Shin Bet, Israel's domestic security, with information about what the Iranians wanted. At the same time, Shabtai Shavit, then head of Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence organisation, opposed allowing Manbar to continue with his business. It was damaging Israel's relations with the US because Washington had embarked on dual containment of Iran and Iraq. By 1994, US pressure on Manbar was becoming intense and officials were pressing Israel for his prosecution.

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Militias bring starvation to south Sudan

NEWS OF the ceasefire in south Sudan will not have reached Akot, a 29-year-old Dinka widow and her three hungry daughters camped out under trees at Malual Kon, Bahr el Ghazal. The three-month truce was called this week between the insurgent Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Islamist government in Khartoum.

Thousands of displaced families have lost everything after running from out-of-control militias. "I have nowhere to go. I am just looking for food," says Akot. "If I find a little food, I'll try and cultivate. If I don't find it, we will die." She speaks bluntly, eyes glazed.

Angong, a 38-year-old widow and mother of seven, was in a group of about 60 displaced people, mostly women, children and the elderly, living in the open about 50 yards from Akot. Their stories tallied. "We were forced to run by these militias," says Angong. "They burned down all the houses and killed us. Some of the men were killed and children were kidnapped."

"Now we are in need of everything. We have no shelter, medicines or food. Even if we get food now, we have no pots to cook it in."

The Popular Defence Forces (PDF), a rag-tag cavalry from the north which is backed by the government of Sudan, killed Angong's husband in March and Akot's husband last year. They have just been back to finish the job: burning houses and crops, killing, raping, stealing, abducting children and young women for slave labour.

Their "job" is to guard the railroad from Khartoum to the garrison towns of the south, but their patron does not pay them. The pay-off is raiding the countryside either side of the line.

"We ran for nine days," Akot says. "We came here because I heard there was food being dropped."

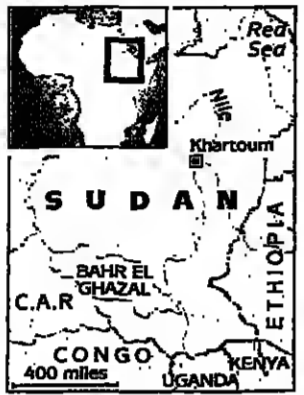
She had not yet received any rations from the United Nations World Food Programme,

BY LOTTE HUGHES
in Malual Kon, south Sudan

which estimates that 1.2 million southerners need food aid.

The children do not know or care who the big players are. "We only have leaves to eat - we've got pains in our tummies," says three-year-old Ayuen, cradling her baby sister, Anger, who was crying from lack of milk.

Two years of drought have pushed people to the edge, in one of the harshest environ-



ments on earth. But it is human actions which are pushing these tough people over that edge now.

When people leave their homes in terror, they drop everything. All Akot has is one sack, which covers the children at night, a couple of bowls and a wickerwork cradle.

People on the march to find help are already weak from hunger and can fall ill along the way.

Malual Kon, like many other towns, is being flooded with destitute immigrants, who are putting great pressure on a population that is itself desperate. "The situation is bad and getting worse," says Arkangelo Athian Teng, 47, local representative of the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRRA), the relief wing of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). As SRRRA

secretary for Aweil East county, he works closely with aid agencies such as Britain's Save the Children in the UN's Operation Lifeline Sudan. They are distributing survival kits to destitute families.

"I am confused completely," he says. "I don't know how to handle the situation. People are depending totally on relief. Food is the first medicine; the priority now is food."

Among the displaced are growing numbers of children who have either lost their families or become separated from them in the confusion. Their voices are rarely heard.

Diok Kun is eight and an orphan, now living in Lankien, Upper Nile. After his parents died, Diok wandered in the bush for years. He has coped with hunger, fear and marauding soldiers.

He went from door to door, begging for food and a place to sleep. He says most people drove him away because they were also hungry and desperate.

Diok remembers being so small he couldn't keep up with the other people running from the fighting around them. "As the years went by I became a bit faster. I learnt how to walk, how to run."

He wasn't afraid of soldiers because he knew they left food behind in their cooking pots. He followed them and scraped the leftovers.

A childless Nuer woman, Mary Nyakole Joak, recently took pity on Diok and gave him a home. He calls her mum. "I came here and found the boy also suffering," says Mary. "He is like a baby to me."

If the war resumes, and enough food doesn't get here, people will keep moving. The fight is on to stop more mass migration by supporting people where they live, with essentials such as seeds, tools, veterinary drugs, fishing tackle and water - as well as bringing emergency relief to those who have fallen too far.



Many children who have arrived in Bahr el Ghazal, south Sudan, have lost their families Philippe Remaury

Prisoners freed as Mandela turns 80

BY BRENDAN BOYLE
in Johannesburg

NINE THOUSAND South African prison inmates were told yesterday they will walk free as a government gesture to mark President Nelson Mandela's 80th birthday.

As Mandela's birthday fever took hold the Correctional Services minister, Siphiso Mzimela, said the releasing of prisoners who have less than six months to serve will begin on Monday. All other prisoners will enjoy a six-month sentence remission.

South Africans of every rank showered Mr Mandela with praise ahead of his last birthday as president of the country he led from apartheid to democracy. "I believe that never again will a nation see in one man the realisation of every hope and dream as they did in President Nelson Mandela," political rival Mangosuthu Buthelezi said in a birthday message.

Mr Mandela's birthday celebration started on Thursday with a party for 1,000 orphans in the Kruger game park east of Johannesburg. Yesterday he attended the Methodist Church conference, telling clergy: "Today I am 79 years and 364 days old. My life has been a long journey. I am grateful for the learning during my early years, which laid the foundations for my life."

He was due back in Johannesburg later on Friday to prepare for a private family celebration on Saturday that, one Johannesburg newspaper says, could include his marriage to his Mozambican sweetheart, Graca Machel. Mandela, who is twice divorced, and Machel, widow of former Mozambican president Samora Machel, have lived together for half of every month for almost two years, but have said repeatedly they have no immediate plans to marry.

On Sunday, he will join 2,000 guests including present and former heads of state at an 8,000 rand-a-head (£800) birthday banquet near Johannesburg.

Mandela leaves on Monday for Brazil, but the party will continue with charity concerts in Cape Town and Johannesburg to raise funds for his Mandela Children's Fund.

Weekend Review, Front

Bearing HIV with grace

FLORENCE NGOBENI still looked wistful about Geneva. James MacIntyre and Glenda Gray, the medical co-directors of the mother and baby Aids unit, at Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital, had just returned from the largest international gathering of Aids experts. Ms Ngobeni, 25, the unit's Aids counsellor, would have given almost anything to have gone too.

"I wanted to hear the latest developments and meet counsellors from other parts of the world," she said. "You don't learn by sitting in the same place." There was no money to send her; and, supporting seven younger siblings, she could hardly have financed herself.

Aids is crippling Africa, culling a generation. It is a shame the articulate Ms Ngobeni did not make Geneva, where there were plenty of First World voices, but pitifully few African ones.

FOR MS Ngobeni there is no time to dwell on disappointment. In Soweto, around 20 per cent of expectant mothers are testing HIV positive. Without anti-Aids drugs, the transmission rate from mother to baby is around 30 per cent. Three babies a day are born infected with the virus. In the waiting room skinny sick children crawl across the floor.

The unit could be a depressing place were it not for Ms Ngobeni and the staff. This week the cash-strapped unit is splashing out a little. The painters are in and grey walls are turning cheerful yellow. The clinic's clients helped with a vibrant mural the length of the corridor.

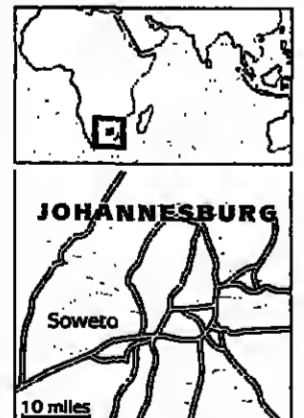
Ms Ngobeni is rushing around with the cutest baby tied by a blanket to her back. "Is it yours?" I ask. "It only," she says. Then she smiles a smile that makes everyone else's look like a tight grimace.

LATER SHE tells me how she learned she was HIV positive. At the end of 1996 she gave

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF Florence Ngobeni, Aids counsellor at Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital



Children playing in the streets of Soweto PA



birth to her first child: Nonthuzi, a daughter. Within three months the baby was very sick and Ms Ngobeni's partner was dead. A friend told her Dr Gray could work miracles. So she wrapped Nonthuzi up and brought her to the clinic. The doctors did their best but Nonthuzi died two months later.

Ms Ngobeni also tested positive. But in the midst of grief, the unit struck gold. It took five months for Dr Gray to raise the funding but then Ms Ngobeni joined the unit's staff, emerging, as suspected, a forceful voice of those living with HIV.

"I see some really sick babies," she says. "And they remind me of my baby and I cry even when I think I am past crying. But I love working here. I get to be with children; and I know how their mothers feel, though it's hard to ex-

plain to them that sometimes life turns out like this."

A YOUNG Zulu woman troops in to Ms Ngobeni's office, carrying her 11-month-old daughter with wispy, thinning hair, dressed in candy-stripes. The baby is fractious; her big, black eyes spilling over with tears. She is so shrunk she looks five months old and is drinking water from a feeding bottle because her mother cannot afford formula milk.

Both mother and daughter are HIV positive. Ms Ngobeni probes gently while painstakingly demonstrating how to measure drops and divide up tablets for the baby. "I feel suicidal," the young woman eventually blurts out. "The baby is always sick and I am so tired." Her partner, also HIV-positive, is pressuring her to return to her rural village in KwaZulu Natal. His parents do not like her and he says the baby is sick because it is picking up on the tension.

ALL WEEK she sees them. Women whose children have died; women frantically waiting for their babies' HIV test results; women who have just tested positive; and couples whose marriages are cracking under the strain of HIV. Medically, Ms Ngobeni has little to offer. There is no state-funded Aids treatment; the unit runs, hand-to-mouth, on

foreign donor cash. Anti-Aids drugs are only available to the tiny minority who squeeze on to drug pilot programmes financed by pharmaceutical companies and the United Nations.

The respected Soweto clinic's most substantial pilot involves 492 women taking drugs designed to cut HIV transmission rates from pregnant mother to child. More than 4,000 pregnant women a year test positive locally.

Desperation creates an ethical mine. The clinic is still debating a scandal earlier this year when it was attacked for giving a placebo to women in the perinatal transmission pilot. A United States pressure group claimed the doctors knew the drugs being tested reduced transmission rates. Dr Gray denies the charges. Geneva has left her sick of Western experts prescribing ethical norms for a continent in crisis.

SHE PUTS her face down on the desk just 25 but with the bearing of a much wiser, older woman. "I am exhausted," she says. As well as counselling five days a week, she runs a network for those living with HIV, takes Aids education into the townships and raises funds. She is also fighting her own disease. Tonight she starts her own anti-Aids drugs course. She is frightened. She does not want the drugs to distract her from her work. She has so much still to do. Some day she wants to buy a house for her shack-dweller mother.

In a corner, the flowers bought for the recent visit by French President Jacques Chirac are wilting. But Ms Ngobeni is still nursing the hopes he raised on his visit. She dreams of anti-transmission drugs for all, not just the rich. "I don't regret a single moment I spent with my sick child," she says. "Because I loved her so much." But too many African women, she says, are carrying her excruciating sense of loss.

MARY BRAID

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Suspending judgement on the MPC

HERE ARE two contrasting views of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee. The British Chamber of Commerce, which represents small to medium sized business, says the MPC has its head in the clouds, that it is too academic, and needs an injection of solid down-to-earth reality, presumably in the shape of one of the BCC's members. Meanwhile, the House of Commons Treasury Committee positively spills over with praise for the MPC in its assessment of the Bank of England one year after gaining independence.

There are one or two quibbles. MPs on the committee believe publication of the minutes should be brought forward, and to some extent they seem to share the BCC's view that the MPC's composition might be reinforced by people with more private sector experience. However, these are nitpicking concerns against the general tone of applause adopted in their report - "Bank of England: Operation of Accountability - One Year On".

Back at the British Chambers of Commerce it is loudly proclaimed that industry has "suffered enough". The question now is not whether interest rates should be cut, but when. As far as its director gen-



JEREMY WARNER

We are still in that period where we can't judge whether the MPC is getting it right. It's sensible to wait and see

eral, Dr Ian Peters, is concerned, the sooner the better. One gets the feeling that if he ran monetary policy, interest rates would be less than half their present level, regardless of the inflationary consequences.

Presumably Dr Peters is not going to

get his way. Another rise in rates after next month's meeting is being widely predicted in the City - in the absence of some truly appalling retail sales figures next week. Then again, the City is more often wrong than right about the MPC, and I wouldn't bet on it if I were you. In any case, if the BCC thinks the inflation target should be surrendered for the sake of hard-pressed manufacturers suffering under the pressures of the strong pound and high interest rates, he should direct his criticism more at the Government than the MPC. It is the Chancellor who set the inflation target, and only he has the power to change it.

The key point about the current policy debate, however, is not so much whether the MPC is getting its interest rate decisions right or wrong. Everyone has an opinion on that and for the time being one is as good as another. Rather, it is that we have no way of knowing. Monetary policy is a loose and unpredictable weapon in the fight against inflation: nobody knows exactly how it works or precisely how interest-rate decisions are going to affect the real economy. Furthermore, the application of policy, not to mention the definition of inflation, is be-

coming an ever more sophisticated and complicated science.

What we do know is that it can take anything up to two years for policy to have the desired effect. So at the moment, we are still in that period of not being able to judge if the MPC is getting it right or not. The most sensible stance in these circumstances is to wait and see. As the Treasury Select Committee says, give it another year and then we'll be in a much better position to see whether the MPC is living up to its remit, which is to maintain price stability, and subject to that, to support the economic policy of Her Majesty's Government, including its objectives for growth and employment. If it is not - if it has by then plunged the UK economy into recession - then root and branch reform can justifiably be demanded.

The Select Committee promises the MPC it will be held to account for its actions. In particular, MPs will be looking at whether it was economically justified to leave interest rates unchanged for seven months between November last year and June this - a strategy much criticised in private by the Chancellor who takes the view that the MPC would have been wise

to have got the pain over at an earlier stage. Its next report should make much more trenchant reading.

ANDREW TEARE, chief executive of Rank, ought to be a worried man as he pores over the figures that will make up the leisure group's soon to be announced interim results. It is hard to see how they can be anything other than poor given the way the slowdown in the economy and the atrocious summer weather is affecting most areas of consumer spending. About the only thing people are shelling out money for is overseas holidays, and that is the last thing this British-dependent Butlins holiday camps and leisure group needs.

Fortunately for him, Mr Teare is not the sort to lose sleep over such matters. This is a man who often appears not to have a care in the world, regardless of the fact that the knives seem to have been out for him almost from the moment he took up the reins at Rank a little over two years ago. His demeanour is relaxed and jovial, sometimes to the point of seeming to be out of touch with his business and his shareholders.

Whether or not this is just an unfortu-

nate front, which disguises what is at root a restless and driven soul, the City doesn't like it, and it makes a bad situation worse. With Rank's shares having failed to sustain the rally they enjoyed in the early part of the year, and now in danger of falling out of the FTSE 100, Mr Teare is going to have his work cut out to bring the City round. He's judged to have done the right thing in selling out of Rank Xerox, but he is widely believed to have overpaid for the Uncle Tom Cobleigh pubs chain. He's investing heavily in Mecca. Hard Rock and Butlins, but it could be years before we see the results of this spending show through to the bottom line.

Though some of what he is doing has gone down much better in the City than the press - notably his attempt to revive Butlins - the company is still generally seen as a disjointed leisure conglomerate on which Mr Teare has so far failed to stamp a cohesive strategy or culture. Mr Teare might argue that he's had too little time to be judged, and he would be right to do so. None the less he's going to have to come out with some very plausible explanations and a compelling vision for the future to vanquish the wolves now gathering at his door.

Vaux back in the spotlight as Footsie hits new highs

THE STOCK MARKET never willingly lets go of a good takeover yarn. Last month Vaux, the brewer and hotelier, admitted an "unsolicited" approach but within a few days the unidentified bidder walked away.

The shares, riding high at 356p, promptly collapsed to around 315p. Yesterday they jumped 33p to 348.5p as talk of corporate action - a bid or demerger - went the rounds.

Almost certainly the unnamed bidder was Stakis, the ambitious casino and hotel group, unchanged at 123.5p. One suggestion was that it backed out of any proposed Vaux deal when it became aware that Thistle Hotels was available to the highest bidder.

CAPTAIN OM WAITS, once a well known yacht chandler, is set to become a financial group. Now a shell, it is involved in two reverse take overs. It has acquired Clifton Financial Services for £1.8m in cash and shares and is bidding £2.8m in shares for stockbroker Ellis & Partners. The Captain's shares were suspended on AIM at 6p. When the deals are completed the company will return to market as Talisman House. Both targets specialise in small companies.

But it was rumoured earlier this week that Stakis had been pushed aside in the battle to win Thistle. What would be more logical than for a return to its earlier target, Vaux?

The Sunderland group's brewing and pub operations are not the attraction for Stakis. It is the highly successful 35 Swallow Hotels. In all probability Stakis would seek to sell Vaux's 850 pubs and close its two breweries.

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

It is the very success of its hotels which is presenting an agonising problem for Vaux and its new chief executive Martin Grant (ex-Allied Domecq).

They are by far the most attractive part of Vaux; without their profits contribution the Sunderland group's record would be particularly unimpressive.

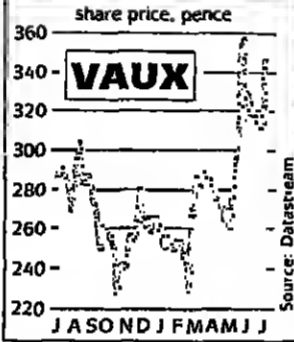
Mr Grant could attempt to head off a bid by selling or demerging the hotels. Still, with the securitisation approach, even the pubs could appeal to a group like Nomura.

Merrill Lynch has suggested Vaux could be worth up to 430p a share.

Blue chips were once again in exhilarating form, with Footsie pounding to a new 6,174-point peak with a 57.2 gain; the double witching created the merest ripple. In fact the index made an enthusiastic start following New York's overnight record and got up steam again during the afternoon as Wall Street held firm. This week, after drifting for around three months, Footsie has romped ahead nearly 250 points. Supporting indices made modest headway.

The three Footsie constituents which created such a stir as the market closed on Thursday managed the predictable recoveries, leading the blue chip leader board. Thames Water rose 79p to 1.108p; Sev-

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



ern Trent 51p to 1,052p and Safeway 27.25p to 379.25p.

Asda ended 2p off at 212p. The supermarket chain jumped 8p in the last five minutes on Thursday, re-awakening speculation that it was about to embark on a corporate excursion.

It has held talks with Kingfisher, up 11.75p to 497p, and Safeway. Kingfisher's progress occurred despite Merrill Lynch downgrading its stance to neutral. The investment house said it had become concerned about the retailer's strategy and the economic outlook was now less certain.

Somerfield, the supermarket chain, held at 443.5p despite support from CSFB, which suggested a 12-month target of 500p; Coca-Cola Beverages firmed 2.5p higher to 183.5p although BT Alex Brown made cautious noises, suggesting a more realistic price was 140p. British Steel lost 3p to 142.5 with Dresdner Kleinwort Benson threatening to reduce its numbers.

Hays, the business support group, firmed 3p to 973p. The shares have been under pressure lately following mixed analysts' comments. On Thursday evening the group held what one source described as an "analysts' jamboree" on the River Thames. Whitbread, the brewer, was another toasting analysts on Thursday evening; it frothed 27p to 983p.

RioTinto hardened 20p to 757p, reflecting the firmer copper price and BSI's edged forward 14p to 510p on its talks to buy into Telecom Italia.

International Public Relations, the old Shandwick group, rose 16.5p to 66p as the long-mooted bid appeared from Interpublic, the US group. Waste Recycling improved 29p to 498.5p after it confirmed it planned a major acquisition, and Radius, a computer group advanced 10.5p to 52.5p as its management offered 55p a share.

Partico, the car parts group, accelerated 27p to 258.5p; it confirmed a takeover approach from rivals Finelast. Vymura, a wall-covering group, jumped 17p to 152p on speculation jay multi-millionaire Trevor Hemmings, who has lifted his stake to 22.3 per cent, is preparing to

ADMIRAL, the computer group, rose 40p to 1,327.5p. The market got hold of a story that the company had enjoyed favourable mentions at a seminar given by highly rated industry analyst Richard Holway.

bid for full control. Steepy Kids, the character merchandiser, put on a further 3.5p to 18p on the Richard Digance link.

ENIC, the Joseph Lewis vehicle, scored a 16p gain to 184p after a Swiss court of arbitration ruled that at least for the time being clubs with a corporate link could play in the same European football competition. The company has stakes in two European clubs which have qualified to play in the UEFA Cup.

SEAQ VOLUME: 734.5m
SEAQ TRADES: 68,672
Gilt index: n/a

Angry shareholders attack Sears board

THE BOARD OF Sears, the struggling retail group, faced two hours of hostile questions from shareholders at an ill-tempered emergency meeting yesterday which eventually approved the demerger of the Selfridges department store business.

Private shareholders queued up to lambaste the board over the group's performance, the board's lack of retail experience, the absence of a chief executive and the demerger's timing. One described Sears as "the Titanic of all retail groups".

One shareholder called for the whole board to resign, while another questioned the board's judgement in demerging Selfridges. "Why should shareholder-

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

ers trust such important decisions to this board when most of the decisions they have taken in the last three to five years have been uniformly awful," he said.

Sir Bob Reid, Sears chairman, kept control although he appeared close to losing his temper as shareholders made personal attacks on individual directors. "You can have a vendetta against the chairman but not against individual directors. I have to maintain the morale of the board," he said.

Sir Bob defended the decision to bundle the demerger vote with a director incentive

scheme. "There was consultation, there was modification and transparency to the extent that the Association of British Insurers [which represents institutional investors] depressed full satisfaction," he said.

The demerger was voted through on a show of hands. Proxy votes cast showed 92.8 per cent in favour and 0.2 per cent against; 6.9 per cent abstained.

The meeting included a downbeat trading statement with performance "broadly in line with the trading statement in the listing particulars". That showed Selfridges' sales down 4 per cent in the first 19 weeks, with Freemans' up 2 per cent, Sears clothing flat and chil-



Sir Bob Reid: Struggled to control the meeting

dren's wear down by 6 per cent. After a 10-for-one share consolidation, Selfridges shares start trading separately on Monday. SG Securities suggests a 180p-210p price for Selfridges shares and around 330p for the Sears rump. Sears closed up 0.25p at 53.5p.

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18 July 1998

IN BRIEF

Management bids for Radius

RADIUS, the computer services group, said it had received a bid approach from a group led by the company's management. Radius shares jumped 10.5p to 52.5p as a management buyout team backed by Alchemy, the venture capital group, tabled a bid of 55p a share, valuing the company at £15.4m. Radius management will own 35 per cent of the new company to be called Sudiar.

US trade suffers

US COMMERCE Secretary William Daley warned that problems in Asia were affecting US exports and driving up the trade deficit, as the US deficit for May rose to a record \$15.7bn (£9.6bn) from \$14.3bn in April.

Food takeover

PERKINS FOODS, the chilled and frozen foods group, bought Fresh-Pak Chilled Foods, which makes sandwich and snack fillings for supermarkets, for up to £14.7m. Perkins will make an initial payment of £9.7m in cash and loan notes, followed by £5m conditional on Fresh-Pak's operating profits for the year to 1 May 1999.

SPORT

Boxing: Three months after a bloody title battle, a former world champion steps up for a risky rematch tonight

Eubank II -
a fight full of
foreboding

BY GLYN LEACH

THERE IS a sense of uneasiness surrounding tonight's world title fight at the Sheffield Arena. Even those who consider themselves to be hardened to the "down to the bone" nature of boxing are questioning the World Boxing Organisation cruiserweight championship rematch between Carl Thompson and Chris Eubank.

There are doubts that the fighters have had opportunity to recover fully from their considerable exertions of the first fight. It was only three months ago that they knocked seven - closer to a perfect 10, in reality - balls out of each other in Manchester. That night, on home ground, the unsung Thompson retained his title after 12 of the most gruelling rounds to be seen in Britain this decade. Neither gave an inch, both took tremendous amounts of punishment.

But at some point in those 36 minutes of unremitting violence, a barrier was crossed; the conflict stopped being glorious and became grotesque. The fight was simply too hard for many sensibilities. What their superhuman collective effort culminated in was a spectacle bordering on the inhuman.

They say that a good big 'un always beats a good little 'un. But the stomach-turning nature of the first fight came through the pairing of a rather ordinary, seemingly fragile big 'un - Thompson - and a too tough, too brave little 'un in Eubank. Both showed that they could hurt and be hurt, without ever looking capable of finishing the other off. They appeared to cancel each other out. Thompson was down and seemingly troubled on a number of occasions, while Eubank fought virtually blind for half the fight, his left eye having become hideously swollen. But on they went.

For vastly differing reasons, victory in the first fight was essential to both men. And, if anything, the stakes have been raised for the rematch. Eubank, the former middleweight and super middleweight champion, is Britain's most successful world-championship level

fighter ever. But the 31-year-old has now lost his last four world title fights and the days of million-pound purses are long gone for the fighter who has bemoaned the fact that his parents were not accountants. Thompson, at 34, longs for just a fraction of what Eubank once had and sees victory, an emphatic one this time, over Eubank as his route to achieving it.

The fear is that tonight will simply be a continuation of their first meeting, rounds 13 to 24 inclusive, and that something, surely, has to give if they are allowed to go on as before for too long. The human body, even in its most resilient forms, is not designed to withstand such onslaught.

But Eubank and Thompson have received medical clearance to fight this evening, and even if the British

'Something has to give in the rematch and the strong likelihood is that it will be the flesh around Eubank's left eye'

Boxing Board of Control actually wanted to prevent it taking place, to do so would be to risk restraint of trade legal action. Now boxing must deal with whatever the consequences may be as Eubank attempts to record his 46th victory in 52 fights, 24 of which will have been for world titles, while Thompson tries to extend his record beyond 23-4.

At the end of a week in which Paul Flynn, the Labour MP for Newport, presented a private member's bill to outlaw blows to the head in boxing, it is somewhat ironic that Thompson and Eubank should be locking horns again. The Minister of Sport, Tony Banks, is apparently unsympathetic to Flynn's bill but, having been present at ringside for the first fight, Banks will be aware that his colleague's arguments might hold more credence than his own by the end of this evening.

Originally, it appeared that even tonight's promoter, Frank Warren, was against the rematch taking place just 12 weeks after the first bout. When Eubank announced in May on Ian Wright's TV chat show, that tonight would be the night, Warren seemed to say no way.

But a TV date fell open when Naseem Hamed, mindful of his new parental status - and, of course, a hand injury - withdrew from contention for tonight's main event in his hometown. With the absolute dirth of true star quality in British boxing today, Thompson-Eubank II - for which the fighters are expected to receive around £250,000 each - was the only fight big enough to replace an appearance by the only true attraction in domestic boxing.

And despite the fact that there are likely to be many empty seats in the 12,000-capacity arena, this fight is a huge attraction. Even in America, tonight's clash will be shown live, coast-to-coast. It is supremely ironic that, approaching the end of a career that has been criticised for an overly large amount of seemingly uncompetitive matches, Eubank has finally attracted attention in the country where he turned professional, 13 years ago. The first fight with Thompson was the sort that generally ends careers, not starts them.

In truth, MP Flynn's worst fears pertaining to boxing are unlikely to come to fateful fruition tonight. The horrendous run of serious brain injuries suffered in British rings over the last year is unlikely to be continued by the main event at Sheffield.

But something has to give and the strong likelihood is that it will be the flesh around Eubank's left eye, which could swell up without half the prompting it received in the first fight. If so, the fight could fizzle out within four or five rounds. But then Eubank might just be able to take Thompson out with a concerted early attack. And in that lies the greater dilemma surrounding boxing: while the sport can be horrific, turning away from it leaves one at risk of missing something very special indeed.



Chris Eubank's swollen face displays the damage he suffered in the first world title meeting with Carl Thompson

WORLD CUP: INFLATABLE DOLLS, OWN GOALS AND MEMORABLE MOMENTS FROM A VOCAL FRANCE 98

BY PHIL SHAW

'Jaap Stam looks like Steve Bould on skates'

Des O'Connor: If England win, will you come back and sing a duet with me?

Elton John: If they win, I'll come back and sleep with you. Exchange on O'Connor's TV show.

What have I brought with me? My football boots and an inflatable doll, because a month without a woman would be difficult.

Eric Deflandre, Belgium defender.

Do I have nightmares about Ronaldo? I'm a family man with a wife and three kids so I don't dream about footballers.

Colin Hendry, Scotland captain.

Sex before a game? The boys can do whatever they like. But it's not possible at half-time.

Berti Vogts, Germany coach.

What the players do in their time off is their private business, but if it [sex] enhances performances I'm all for it.

Steve Sampson, United States coach.

If the wives do come out to France it will be at the right time to give a boost to the players - not to have sex.

Glen Hoddle, England coach.

The English invented it and exported it, and other people picked it up and ran with it. But England intend reminding world champions of hooliganism.

Keith Cooper, English Fifth official.

Football matches are now a substitute for the old medieval tournaments. They are, by their nature, aggressive and con-

frontational, so it is perfectly natural that some of the fans should be obstreperous.

Alan Clark, Conservative MP, defending England fans.

Normal people come here in the morning and order coffee and croissants. The English come and what do they want? Beer. At midday the civilised world sits down to lunch. And what do the English want? Beer.

Barman at the Café le Fregate, Toulouse.

Considering the Vikings knocked hell out of the Scots a thousand years ago, they're very forgiving, though we obviously taught them how to drink.

Norway fan in Bordeaux, quoted in Le Sud-Ouest newspaper.

Blair nailed his colours to the English mast and was hoist by his own petard. It must be a lot more difficult to enter the spirit of things with the English fans because it isn't top hats they stick on you, it's something else.

Alex Salmond, SNP leader, after the Prime Minister criticised his opportunism in donning a tartan top.

Their eating habits really surprised me, especially mixing jam with smoked fish and mackerel with bananas.

Georges-Marie Duffaud, director of the Norway squad's hotel.

I'll say openly that I'm a bit ashamed of the press. I've known for some time that I'm dealing with dishonest, incompetent yobs.

Aimé Jacquet on press criticism early in the tournament.



Owen: 'The World Cup has lost found its juvenile lead'

Barry Davies: 'Oh! Look at that, between his legs.'

David Pleat: 'Beautiful, isn't it? Exchange during Scotland v Morocco, BBC.'

For a moment I thought I was Pele.

Robbie Earle, first Jamaican ever to score in the finals.

It's a funny old game. All credit to the Iranian lads. They gave it 110 per cent.

Savo Milošević, Yugoslavia striker, proving his time with Aston Villa was not entirely wasted.

Once you've played at Millwall, you can handle anything.

Kasey Keller, US and ex-Millwall keeper, before 'mother of all matches' v Iran.

It's the back four of the Marie Celeste.

Ally McCoist, BBC pundit, as Iranians broke clear against the US.

I don't know what more we could've done other than have Ronaldo born in the US.

Alan Rothenberg, president of the US Soccer Federation, after three defeats.

We're on the march with Allah's Army.

Scottish Sun headline on the Moroccans.

If you want to be blunt about it he [Edgar Davids] has a reputation as a dirty wee bastard, but also as a great man to have when the going gets tough.

Craig Brown, Scotland manager.

Jaap Stam looks like Steve Bould on skates.

David Pleat on Manchester United's £10.5m Dutch defender, BBC.

Ever since I stopped playing, people have been comparing strikers with me. If anyone wants to say it about Michael Owen, however, they are quite welcome.

Jimmy Greaves after the 18-year-old's wonder goal against Argentina.

That's that, then. He won't be playing for you next season.



Ronaldo: 'The boy is young and everyone is on his back'

Paul Merson to Steve McNamara on the England bench as Owen struck.

The World Cup has at last found its juvenile lead, its Leonardo DiCaprio. And this star is leaving us after a Titanic match. Michael Owen has done everything to restore England's image, which was becoming that of a simple factory of tattooed hooligans and alcoholics.

Le Monde newspaper.

Memories of Italia 90? I don't have any. I was sent to bed before the matches started.

Michael Owen.

When Campbell's 'goal' was disallowed, the Queen, taking the mick out of herself, lifted her hands and said: 'One is not amused.' She was almost doing a Spitting Image mimicry of herself.

Eric Milligan, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, on HM's reaction to England's exit.

After tonight, England v Argentina will be remembered for what someone did with his feet.

Adidas advert featuring David Beckham on the day his kicking of an opponent led to his dismissal.

Tony Adams broke the silence, shouting: 'Well done, everybody, you couldn't have done more.' That's when he came over and said he still loved me.

Beckham describes the mood in the dressing-room afterwards.

10 Heroic Lions, One Stupid Boy

Mirror headline on Beckham.

Beckham's silly little, smart little kick at his opponent was what's wrong with the national character. This Gaultier-saronged, Posh Spiced, Cooled Britannia, look-at-me, what-a-lad, loadsamoney, sex-and-shopping, fame-schooled, daytime TV, over-coiffed twerp did not, of course, mean any harm.

Daily Telegraph editorial.

He doesn't deserve to be the most hated man in Britain.

Victoria Adams (aka Posh Spice), Beckham's fiancée.

You could make a video just of all the dives and it would last an hour. There are a lot of beautiful dives in this competition, so many contenders for the best.

The strikers run into you and fall over. When the ref blows his whistle you just stand there for a few seconds with your eyes shut.

Jaap Stam.

The French do not concede many goals but they are not that good. It's a paradox.

Miroslav Blazevic, Croatia coach.

It's the greatest day for this country since the French Revolution.

Emmanuel Petit after completing the rout of Brazil in the final.

A tricolour orgasm.

France Soir newspaper.

The boy is young and everyone is always on his back. He can't go to the beach, the cinema or the theatre. Stop the hype about him or else he'll explode.

Lidio Toledo, Brazil team doctor, on Ronaldo's "30-second convulsive fit" before the final.

Here was a 21-year-old, the best player in the world, surrounded by contracts and pressure. Something had to give. And when it did, it happened to be the day of the World Cup final.

Roberto Carlos, Ronaldo's Brazilian room-mate.

No team or match in France has convinced me. Diego Maradona told me there are too many players here with square feet, and I have to agree.

Franz Beckenbauer.

Rugby Union: The in-fighting in England means the factions face each other again to vote for a leader

Baister ready to step into line of fire

BY CHRIS HEWETT

THE BALLOON goes up at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham tomorrow – a highly appropriate choice of venue, given that England's rugby administrators have now been making an exhibition of themselves for three laughably incompetent years. It would be comforting to believe that by the time it comes back down again, Twickenham's ugly little civil war will have reached armistice point. Fat chance.

Whatever the outcome of the Rugby Football Union's Annual General Meeting, there will be no de-commissioning of the peashooters and water pistols. Another victory for Cliff Brittle, who sees himself as a paragon of Cromwellian principle but is actually the James Goldsmith of English rugby politics (bags of money, plenty to say very few friends), will not simply prolong the agony but intensify it. Every word he utters is anathema to his Premiership foe – that is to say, the clubs who actually pay the players and provide 95 per cent of the entertainment each season – and his re-election as chairman of the RFU's management board will quickly land the whole shooting match in the High Court.

Against him stands Brian Baister, the RFU's own candidate. Rather like Bob Rogers, last year's unsuccessful anti-Brittle stalking horse, the former deputy chief constable of Cheshire plans to play the conciliation card. Unlike Rogers, he has been able to match Brittle's well-oiled propaganda machine with one of his own and his concerted efforts in the shires have persuaded a number of county unions to switch allegiance.

However, the Brittle-ite RFU Reform Group will not take a Baister victory lying down; rather they will inflict a special general meeting on a game that needs another congressional get-together in the same

way that Austin Healey needs another 80 minutes against Jeff Wilson. There are some mighty egos, as opposed to mighty intellects, at work here and no one needs think that a simple vote at an AGM will cause an outbreak of lockjaw among the talking heads.

At least Baister, a public supporter of the compromise Mayfair Agreement signed by the RFU and the clubs in May, is prepared to talk things through. He appreciates that for all their perceived faults, the club owners, the Sir John Halls and Nigel Wray of this world, are wholly responsible for the growth of professional rugby in England. It may not be growing on stable foundations – despite Tom Walkinshaw's very generous current account, a well-supported Gloucester managed a seven-figure deficit last season – but the domestic game is infinitely stronger than that in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Which brings us neatly to the International Board, whose threats to expel England from their number have dovetailed far too snugly with Brittle's vitriolic assaults on the Premiership clubs. "Neither the RFU nor our clubs and players have any future outside the IB and the Mayfair Agreement jeopardises our membership," said Brittle this week. "This is not scaremongering. It is fact."

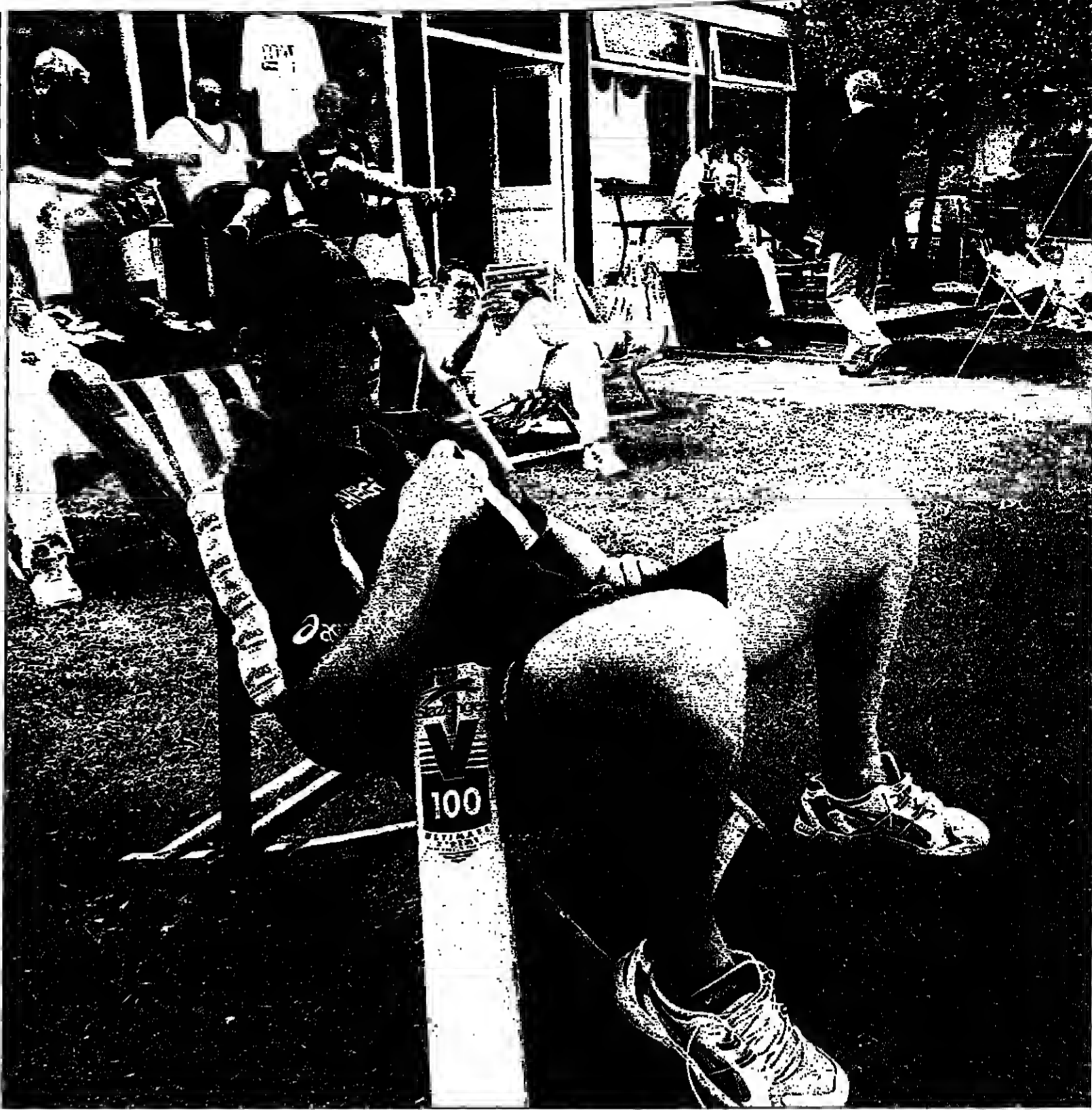
It is, of course, nothing of the sort; rather, it is a red herring of *Moby Dick* proportions. The IB do not like the fact that the Premiership owners are challenging the legality of a range of rules through the offices of the European Commission and they are less enamoured, still, by the prospect of the clubs winning the day. They are further disturbed by the number of southern hemisphere players earning their corn in the green fields of Blyth and remain incandescent at the weak tour party selected by England this summer. All the same, no IB

member in full possession of his faculties would even dream of wrecking next year's World Cup by excluding one of only five potential champions.

Two of the most trenchant critics of England's painful attempts to get to grips with professionalism, Wales' Vernon Pugh and Ireland's Tom Kiernan, might usefully take a peek into their own backyards, for the game there is in pieces. They should also understand that England are not to blame. The culprits are none other than their beloved New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, who jumped into bed with Rupert Murdoch without a word to anyone and left the rest of the world game to seek their own salvation. And the IB have the brass neck to accuse the Premiership clubs of setting unrealistic market rates. They really should grow up and get real.

Both Brittle and Baister are buying into the radical idea of a British league – something of a U-turn by the former, it seems – and both want to see English Premiership sides represented in the Heineken Cup, their withdrawal from which was the single most depressing aspect of last season's political shenanigans. Neither will be achieved without consensus and when all is said and done, Brittle's relationship with the clubs is, for want of a better word, brittle.

Tomorrow's decision makers will be the rank and file of the amateur game, a selfless band of rugby enthusiasts who, in many cases, have a great understanding of or interest in, the history of this grubby, self-important affair. According to the best independent pollsters – where are you when we need you, Peter Snow? – Brittle may well win the day on a drastically reduced share of the vote. If he does so, England will have its national team and it will have its grass roots. Sadly, there will be very little of value in between.



Andrew Flintoff, Lancashire's 20-year-old batting phenomenon, relaxes before going out to do battle for the Red Rose county. Peter Jay

Hard-hitting Flintoff has the look of a champion

The young Lancastrian tagged 'the new Ian Botham' may well be worthy of the label. By Jon Culley

IT IS just as well that Dav Whatmore, Lancashire's Australian head coach, has patience among his attributes. Of all the calls he has taken from journalists lately, eight out of 10 have concerned one player only. In year two of his quest to revive a wilting Red Rose the evidence of progress is beginning to show, yet it must seem to him sometimes that no one outside Old Trafford has noticed.

Perhaps they will soon. Lancashire, as they tire of being reminded, have not won a Championship in their own right since 1934. Indeed, they have finished above fourth only once in the last 25 years, which is a sorry record for a club of their stature and one for which no amount of one-day silverware adequately compensates.

After a productive midsummer, however, Lancashire have moved quietly into a position, on the heels of the leading group, in which they can be considered contenders. And it has not all been down to Andrew Flintoff, the 20-year-old phenomenon being thrust towards the Test arena in his first full season as a County player.

"Flintoff has been a bit of a spur to everyone, most definitely," Whatmore said. "But full credit must go to the whole team for playing consistent cricket all season. We have had one or two terrific individual performances but overall it has been a real team effort."

Although eliminated from the Benson and Hedges Cup at the quarter-final stage, the Red Rose still flies in the NatWest Trophy, in which a home tie against Nottinghamshire offers prospects of a place in the last four. It is also as prominent in the AXA League as the championship, in which a run of four wins in five matches through June hinted at a rekindling of ability in the part of the game in which they have been found wanting.

Even after the winning of six limited-overs trophies in eight seasons between 1989 and 1996, a sequence that restored the reputation Lancashire earned in the early 1970s as masters of the one-day game, the years of inadequacy as a championship side gnaw just as deeply into the county's psyche. It was to build a team capable of overcoming previous shortcomings that Whatmore, who had coached Sri Lanka to World Cup triumph, was appointed in October 1996.

He soon found that to succeed he would have to change attitudes. "They had developed the mentality of a one-day side. It was how they saw themselves," Whatmore said. "They

appeared to be more suited to the shorter game, to know their roles in the shorter game much more clearly than they did in four-day cricket."

"It takes a year experiencing the daily business of county cricket to make a full assessment but since deciding on a course of action the response from the players has been terrific."

"They now understand certain principles and recognise the need for specialists to perform in their given roles. The bowlers have learned to keep up the pressure on opponents and the batsmen to put a higher price on their wickets."

He cites Graham Lloyd as a prime example of a player who has changed his game from one seemingly driven mainly by personal incentives to one designed to benefit the collective ambitions of the team.

"He has modified his game so much," Whatmore said. "In the past you would have thought all he wanted was to score the fastest hundred of the season, which he has for the last two years. Now he appreciates that you can make 30-40 in certain circumstances and have batted really well."

There are others with whom

he is also especially pleased, such as Ian Austin, that most solid of all-rounders, and the wicketkeeper, Warren Hegg, whom Whatmore calls "an unsung hero."

For all their merits, however, there is no keeping the conversation away from Flintoff nor any attempt by the coach, it should be said, to underplay his talents. Last month, the powerhouse from Preston, who stands 6ft 4in and appears to be nearly as wide, won two championship games almost single-handedly, giving more credibility still to an increasingly popular theory that English cricket has finally unearthed a "new Ian Botham" worthy of the label.

Described by Michael Atherton as the hardest hitter in the current game, Flintoff scored a half-century in 20 balls to hasten the defeat of the leaders Surrey, an innings that included a world record 38 in one eight-ball over (34 off the bat) against the unfortunate Alex Tudor, and then bludgeoned 70 off 95 deliveries to secure victory over Warwickshire.

"He has things he needs to work at but he is learning very quickly," Whatmore said, "and he gives the captain so many options. Quite apart from his obvious qualities as a batsman, he is a wonderful slip fielder, is superb at bat-and-pad and has one of the fastest arms in county cricket."

And he can bowl, too, so sharply that even three years ago, when he first broke into the Lancashire side, he was forcing the wicketkeeper to stand back as though he were Wasim Akram. His infrequent appearance as a bowler since then has not been because he has been injured, Whatmore insists, but because his muscles needed to grow enough to support his frame, a process now almost complete. Unleashed against Worcestershire at Lytham this week, he took 3-51 in 14 overs.

Having represented England at every level from Under-14 to last winter's A tour, he is seen by some as ready for elevation to the Test side, even as early as Trent Bridge next week. Whatmore is not quite so impatient but sees the moment fast approaching, none the less.

"He has the potential to be a very good international player. I'd hate to see people label him as a superstar now because it is difficult to deal with in someone so young but he will be ready when the time is right, when there is a vacancy."

"I think he should definitely go to Australia this winter. Before that, the triangular one-day series here might be a good opportunity to introduce him, with the Test against Sri Lanka another."

And while he waits he might just help end Lancashire's long wait for a championship for good measure.

THE CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROPOSALS

CLIFF BRITTLE

Age: 56
Job: Retired company chairman after careers with National Cash Register and owning equipment-hire business.
Played: Centre for Stoke, Sale and Staffordshire.
Administration: Coached Staffs; RFU Committee, 1989; Chairman of the Management Board, 1996.



THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO CLIFF BRITTLE

■ A root and branch reorganisation of English rugby's decision-making structure, vesting vastly increased power in a management board effectively hand-picked by the chairman – that is to say, Cliff Brittle, assuming he is re-elected.

■ Subservience to the International Board. Including an abandonment by the Premiership clubs of their European Commission challenge to some of the more draconian IB regulations. According to Brittle, only the IB itself can be permitted to question IB rules.

■ The establishment of yet another "constitutional commission", charged with examining the *modus operandi* of the RFU council. Commission members would be drawn from the general membership rather than the council itself.

■ A renewed campaign to contract leading players to the union rather than their clubs, although Brittle gives no clue as to how this might be achieved without blood on the walls and an entire season spent in the courts rather than on the pitch. "Appeasement must not be mistaken for compromise," he says.

■ The wholesale renunciation of the Mayfair Agreement brokered, much to Brittle's disgust, by the union and the senior clubs in May. He insists that the RFU negotiators, including some former allies, acted outside their brief in striking the accord.

BRIAN BAISTER

Age: 58
Job: Formerly Chief Superintendent with Met Police and Deputy Chief Constable of Cheshire. Now European security advisor to ICI.
Played: John Bright, GS, Llandudno and Met Police.
Administration: Former chairman National Clubs Association; RFU Council, 1996.



THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO BRIAN BAISTER

■ A strict adherence to the compromises enshrined in the Mayfair Agreement, which guarantees the availability of leading players for England duty, the senior clubs' participation in domestic league and cup competitions and a 37-game ceiling for internationals. It also provides Clive Woodward and his national coaching team with unrestricted access to squad members to check on fitness levels.

■ The abandonment of any move towards representative provincial rugby, which has never achieved the remotest impact on England's club-based culture. "The clubs are the future," he says. "Rugby in England, France and Wales is historically based on a strong club structure."

■ The early appointment of a chief executive at Twickenham – a move initially supported by Brittle but then delayed for no discernible reason.

■ More help for the professional clubs as they move towards financial stability and, ultimately, self-sufficiency. "The clubs are being assisted by the union to the tune of £1.5m a year. Therefore, the sooner we recognise that they need to look after their own competencies, sponsorships and the like, the sooner the money can be redirected to the grass roots."

■ Discussions with the clubs on levels of foreign players and an early return to European competition.

Let's hope to be aurally massaged by Alliss

GIVEN THE fact that I come from Southport, with its six golf courses, it's slightly strange that apart from pitch and putt I have never played a round. It must be a class thing – a golfing friend was admitted to the Southport and Ainsdale, but only as a "journeyman member". Then again, he is a Scouser. The nearest we ever came to playing was caddyng at Hillside in the holidays, dispensing advice to rich Americans.

The Royal Birkdale is in the middle of the swankiest part of town and the only time we ever penetrated its defences we made the most of it, thrusting our hands into Lee Trevino's face for him to autograph – after all, he had just won the Open. It should have been a classic case of never washing the blessed palm again. My mum was having none of it.



CHRIS MAUME
SPORT ON TV

As the aerial camera panned over Birkdale at the start of the BBC's highlights of the first day of the Open on Thursday, the nostalgia was instantaneous. There's that beautiful, mysterious round house

I used to be obsessed with as a kid, there's the gasometer – the highest point in Southport, if you're interested – but what's that damned great old rig in the middle of the Irish Sea? What are they doing to my memories? I know, sometimes when we were kids the beach was filled with this black stuff that felt deliciously soft between our toes, but I thought that was just from the ships coming out of Liverpool. Is there oil off the Lancashire coast? Is Southport the new Dallas?

Tiger Woods had a good first day, and the highlights programme stayed mostly with him (he ended up sharing the lead with the slightly less famous John Huston, who featured hardly at all). "Get on, my son," said Peter Alliss, as Woods drove the ball to somewhere near the outskirts of Liverpool.

Alliss has always made a virtue out of slightly sickly cosiness, so laid-back he makes Des Lynam look like Travis Bickle, but it works because it suits what he's talking about. He'd be rubbish at commenting on ice hockey. "Like old Father Thames he keeps going on," Alliss said at one point about Gary Player. "You little rascal," he carried on as a handy putt went in. Let's hope for a lazy weekend and the opportunity to be aurally massaged by Alliss and his equally relaxed colleagues.

The golf is always good to have around, if only to remind us that it's supposed to be summer – those lazy Sunday afternoons, beer in hand, sliding into the gentle rhythms but increasing tension of the final round. But I have to say that, footie apart, my favourite sporting event of the year is the Tour de France.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not a mad cyclist, hardly a cyclist at all, in fact – a supposedly negative attribute people endlessly point out when I indicate my enthusiasm, as if spectating required some kind of competence or experience in riding a bike for a couple of hundred kilometres through drought and hazzard. After all, most rugby league fans don't play rugby league.

The attractions of the Tour are many. It's partly the aesthetics – the speed, the colour, the landscapes – and partly to do with the almost life-threatening effort needed even to think about getting to Paris. There was a bit of a change this year, the Tour starting off in Ireland so as not to clash with the World Cup. Until they actually won the thing, French reactions were pretty lukewarm. If the Tour had been on at the same

time they might as well not have bothered. It would have been interesting to see how the French reacted to victory at the Stade de France, if, say, a Frenchman won the Tour on the same day. Over here, the World Cup's main rival, Wimbledon, faded into the background, for this observer anyway. Even the cricket was merely a distraction from the real business at hand.

Poor Chris Boardman never made it out of Ireland, his crash – which happened on a straight stretch, at normal speed in fine conditions – demonstrating the random and extreme violence of the thing: a touch of wheels and Boardman's Tour was over. The next day he was out of hospital and facing the press, his face "it's a rather extreme way to get a holiday," he said.

The Channel 4 commentary team do a fair job of conveying both the atmosphere and the intricacies of the sport, though one is always left wanting more, both in terms of information and time – surely an hour-long programme isn't too much to ask. The rhythm of the half-hour programme becomes all too predictable a few days in – a bit of an introduction, the start, a few racing bits, the break, a filmed insert from Gary Imbach, then it's on to the finish.

Part of the point about the Tour is its sheer scale – they ride for six hours or more nearly every day for three weeks, but the viewer gets little sense of the excruciating hardship until the Tour reaches the mountains and pain is scored deep in every face, in every screaming muscle. You don't get that at the Royal Birkdale.

127th Open Championship: Lehman, handicapped by shoulder injury, takes difficult conditions in his heavy stride

Learning curve of different strokes

BY KEN JONES

AN ENLIGHTENING experience at major golf championships is to walk a few holes with lesser-known guys who have failed to make an impression on the leader board. They don't hear much applause but are, nevertheless, still playing at a level with which the majority of golfing enthusiasts aren't familiar.

Scratch golf, the unattainable dream of millions, doesn't mean a thing at this level of competition. For example, when a touring professional plays for amusement with his mates he is probably giving away 20 shots or better to high handicappers.

The reality of professional sport was best put to my mind by the American author Roger Cahn in his book *The Boys Of Summer*, which caught up with members of a much-loved Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team many years after their retirement from the game.

As a young sportswriter, Cahn was sent to cover the Dodgers in spring training. Once, he was asked to stand at bat to assist one of the Dodgers' pitchers. "Don't swing at the ball," Cahn heard the catcher say, "just stand perfectly still, don't move a muscle." The next thing Cahn heard was a sound like that of an aggravated

hornet and then the "thwack" of the ball as it arrived in the catcher's glove. "In that moment," he wrote, "I realised that the game they were playing wasn't the one I'd been playing all my life."

I thought about this yesterday when following Loren Roberts, Santiago Lima and Greg Chalmers along the eighth fairway at Birkdale. As it happens, Roberts - who lost in a play-off for the 1994 US Open - and Lima, the Spaniard, were doing rather well, going on to easily make the cut at two over.

However, when they came into view the question most commonly asked was the one Robert Redford asks Paul Newman in *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* when they are unable to shake-off a persistent posse - "Who are those guys?"

The next-but-one group to appear on the horizon caused no problems of identification. I don't know whether Ernie Els spends like a sailor but he certainly walks like one. Tom Lehman is heavy-footed. Mark James resembles a clockwork duck in perambulation.



Ernie Els, the South African, searches the rough for his ball at Royal Birkdale yesterday

David Ashdown

US Open winner, looked exceedingly displeased while Lehman, a former Open winner, conveyed the impression that he couldn't wait to reach the

clubhouse and check the airline timetables. Two days before Lehman set off at Birkdale he wrenched a shoulder when wrestling with

his children in a local playground. Some golfers wouldn't risk lifting a cup so close to a major championship but Lehman, to his credit, is not

obsessive about the game that has made him rich and famous. "You only have young kids once," he said, "and it's hard not to join in and have fun with

them. I want to have some time with my family."

Lehman's record in the last four US Opens is third, second, third and fifth. This year Lehman was asked how he would go about dealing with yet another disappointment. Before the American could reply his wife spoke for him. "What about great sex all night long?" she said. Lehman didn't give more than a second thought to this. "Yeah, that'll do it," he said.

In the idiom of his country, Lehman is known as a regular guy. No hang-ups. Steady golfer and grateful for the good things that have happened to him. When Lehman won two years ago it was an exceedingly popular victory. "Couldn't happen to a nicer fella," people said.

Two days ago Lehman was walking around with his right arm in a sling. Yesterday he had the air of a man who knew that he couldn't do himself justice. By then the sun was on his back but the wind was more than just capricious.

When held up on the ninth tee, Lehman swung an iron gently to keep his shoulder loose and then avoided rough terrain with a drive that found the centre of the fairway. Els went wide and right, his ball taken by the wind into a deep hollow and knee-high rough. The South African shook his head despondently. A fine recovery helped to

secure par but later on the 15th tee, he was six over and looking at an early departure.

Suddenly Els came alive, chipping in for an eagle two that improved his score considerably. A smile crossed Els's face and as he walked to retrieve the ball his hands mimed its motion into the hole.

Lehman, meanwhile, was only fulfilling his obligation as an Open champion. Two more dropped shots and the tally in total was creeping towards double figures. Starting his second round at one over, Lehman was five over for the front nine and another four went over the homeward half.

Els couldn't stay with it either. After bogeying the 17th he needed to make par on the last to have a reasonable chance of remaining for the weekend but a four-foot putt slipped past.

After handing in his card Els was unusually reluctant to engage in conversation. "My back was fine," he said, "so there is no excuse for the way I played. I just don't have it at the moment, no confidence, nothing. Sure, conditions were difficult - especially early on - but you have to get on with it."

Somebody suggested to Els that his six over might still make the cut. "Who cares," he growled. That's if you see. It's an entirely different game that they're playing.



Philip Walton hits his second shot on the ninth hole against a background of umbrellas during his scramble to make the cut at Royal Birkdale yesterday

David Ashdown

Ducking balls and avoiding partridge

SPECTATORS COMING to Royal Birkdale would be advised to add a crash helmet to the list of things they need to bring to enjoy a full day's play.

One fan has already felt the sting of a golf ball hitting them at high speed thanks to the American Brad Faxon, who explained: "On the sixth (par 4, 480 yards) I hit a guy on the butt with my three iron and the ball shot off 40 yards. But I got my par!"

The course at Birkdale has undergone several significant changes since the last visit of the Open here in 1991, but officials have always made a special effort to protect local wildlife. In fact, the course and surrounding areas are home to an extraordinarily diverse number of flora and fauna.

But anyone foolish enough to stray into the rough is warned to be careful looking for a lost ball. Grey partridges, a nationally declining species, live in the grasslands around the course and can be flushed out by inaccurate golfers. Hitting one of those with a three-iron is not the kind of birdie they want.

The name Maurice Flitcroft has been known to give officials nightmares. A man for whom the term "hacker" could have been invented, Flitcroft was a crane driver from Barrow-in-Furness who had a habit of trying to qualify for the Open.

The one drawback, however, was that he was a complete novice with no discernable golfing talent. In the final qualifier held at Formby for the 1976 Birkdale Open he returned a score of 121 in the first round. Officials were spared further embarrassment when he was discovered and withdrew and promised it would never happen again.

Unfortunately, Mr Flitcroft had other ideas and at Pleasington in the first qualifying round for the 1983 championship fired a 63 under the pseudonym Gerald Hoppy. However, the 63 was for the first nine holes only and officials rushed to the 10th tee to discover Mr Hoppy was in fact Flitcroft. He was turfed off the course and officials vowed it would never happen again.

Richard Boxall has distinctly unhappy memories of Birkdale after breaking his leg in a freakish accident in the third round in 1991. The 37-year-old from Camberley was just two shots off the lead in the third round when his left leg snapped as he drove off the ninth tee.

It was an horrific accident but Boxall is able to laugh about it now and even tried to persuade officials to let him start this year's event just two off the lead in the middle of the third round. Unfortunately, he failed to qualify for this year's Open but will be back at Birkdale in his role as on-course commentator for the BBC.

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY Small risk of an overnight shower. Day dry with sunny periods. Maximum temperature 18C, minimum 12C. Wind south-west, 20-25 mph.
TOMORROW Rain, heavy for a time, should clear to sunny intervals and showers in the afternoon. Maximum temperature 17C, minimum 13C. Wind south to south-west, 20-30 mph. Medium risk of thunder.

TELEVISION COVERAGE

BBC1: from 10.45. BBC2: 5.05, 9.0.

Walton's aqualung struggle

WHEN THOMAS Levet of France hit the first ball of yesterday morning he must have wondered to which land he had come. Southport and Ainsdale was more like Sodom and Gomorrah as driving rain and high winds mixed together to form a quite disgusting atmosphere in which to play golf.

Judging by the weather pattern of the tournament's first two days, the next two should start with grass fires followed by a series of blizzards.

These conditions should have been good news for the noble troops of Great Britain and Ireland, and something of an annoyance for the bronzed boys from over the pond. Scott Hoch, and other charlies, would probably have complained that the drizzle which looked as though it was set in for a month was unfair. They seem to forget that golf itself is the most arbitrary of games.

Everyone who started around newspaper delivery time yesterday suffered. Shots were dropped routinely before the shock news arrived that someone had actually birdied the first hole. It was no surprise, however, to learn that this perverse act had been achieved by Sandy Lyle.

What could also be foreseen was that the run would not continue. Lyle achieved double bogey on the 11th,

Trying to make the cut in your native championship is never easy. Add weather that you could swim in and hopes rapidly wash away. By Richard Edmondson

yet his round of 72 was only a shot worse than that of the previous, balmy day. If earthquakes, twisters and a tsunami arrive over the next 48 hours he will probably win.

More likely to succeed, at start of play yesterday anyhow, was the batch of men from these islands who were grouped together on two under par.

While Nick Faldo was thrashing around talk of his injured elbow subsided. The one that seemed to matter was the one he was about to be given out of the tournament. Lee Westwood could not make birdies and Colin Montgomerie could not make head nor tail of anything. But it was not the big men who mattered. The challenging home representation was made up of four drones.

The second round can be the biggest round for many of these lesser figures. They are trying to make the cut in their native championships. Trying to make moony in front of a broader audience. Trying to make a name.

Andrew Coltart and Raymond Russell from Scotland, Swindon's David Howell and Irishman Philip

Walton had all scribbled 68 on their cards after the first round. It was never going to be that easy again. Coltart came back in 40 for a 77. Russell remains close after a 73 while Howell was also struggling when play was suspended. Walton was the first out in the aqualung weather. "We were drowning for nine holes," he reported, "but I was starting to swing the club well."

As Walton emerged through the rainy mists on the ninth green into the view of those in the clubhouse it was just possible to see that his playing partners were Peter Mitchell and Michael Campbell. Mitchell won the Portuguese Open this year at the age of 40 and may have observed that conditions yesterday were unlike those he encountered on the Iberian Peninsula.

Campbell from New Zealand, the land of the long white cloud, also appeared miffed at having to play under a dirty great black one on the Lancashire coast. He puffed cigarettes to keep his spirits up and may have let his mind wander back to St Andrews three years ago, when he led going into the final round.

For reasons known only to himself, the Maori had sunglasses perched on his brow. But then you have to be hopeful to be a golfer.

Walton was the man who sank the winning putt at Oak Hill, Rochester, in 1995 to secure the Ryder Cup. He sank a few pints of Guinness afterwards but nothing of any distinction has dropped since. This year he has played in 14 European Tour events and finished inside the top 40 just twice.

The 36-year-old with the Sergei Bubka putter was going well enough yesterday though until the team reached the 16th tee. On the mobile scoreboard following them it was soon to become Mitchell, Campbell and Oh hell.

Walton found murderous rough with his drive, eventually scrambled

OPEN QUOTES... CLOSE QUOTES

"What are we doing here?"

David Duval, asking his playing partner Justin Leonard why they have forsaken the USPGA tour schedule to come and savour North-West Britain's atrocious weather.

"This must be about the worst weather I've played in." Leonard too comes to terms with the British summer after leaving his Florida home.

"John, I've got to put a number in here that's right...ten was what both Bernhard [Langer] and I thought John made."

Payne Stewart helps John Daly after he loses count of his ten at the 18th.

"Hopefully, if he continues to put well I'll get a commission on some of his rewards."

Mark O'Meara hoping for some reflected glory after giving Tiger Woods a putter.

صباح الخير

SPORT

EUBANK A FIGHT TOO FAR P18 • SCHUMACHER FILLIP FOR FERRARI P27

127th Open Championship: Young Briton upstages illustrious professionals to storm into contention with round of 66

Rose grows in wind and rain

BY ANDY FARRELL
at Royal Birkdale

JUST WHEN the 127th Open Championship was looking like going the way of the previous seven here, with not a home player in sight of the leaderboard, a challenger emerged from the most unexpected quarter. While Nick Faldo, Colin Montgomerie and Lee Westwood were all concerned about surviving the cut to a greater or lesser extent, Justin Rose leapt into contention with a second round of 66, four rounds par.

The 17-year-old's score matched the best by an amateur in the Open. Frank Stranahan set the mark at Royal Troon in 1950 and it was equalled by Tiger Woods at Royal Lytham two years ago. But then Woods was helped by the sort of calm summer's day on which he scored a 65 in the first round on Thursday.

Such days are strictly rationed on the Lancashire coast and yesterday rain and then strong winds made conditions considerably harder. While Rose advanced, Woods and his joint overnight leader, John Huston, were among the strugglers. So were Nick Price and Ernie Els, two heroes of the South African-born Rose.

A total of 27 players were under par starting the day - at two over par, Rose was not one of them - but only a handful were left by the close. A 69 from Brian Watts early in the morning, when it was wet but before the wind had reached its maximum, left him at three under par and by the time Rose joined him in the clubhouse at two under in mid-afternoon, the American was the leader in his own right.

When play was briefly suspended due to the severe weather conditions, Woods had dropped four strokes in 10 holes and was on one under par with Price, who was three over after 10. Huston was six over after 15 holes and the Dane Thomas Bjorn was the only other man under par in the clubhouse at one under after a 71.

Fred Couples and Loren Roberts had been sharing second place with Price overnight but rounds of 74 and 76 gave an indication of the scoring to come. Mark O'Meara, a regular winner at Pebble Beach on the Californian coast where the wind can present similar problems, scored a 68 to move to level par and thought that the conditions were three or four strokes harder than the previous day.

None of this seemed to matter to Rose, whose days as an amateur maybe numbered - an invitation to the Dutch Open next week would see him turn professional in an attempt to gain his card by the



Justin Rose (left) and his caddy line up a putt on the 18th hole during a second round of 66 that put the 18-year-old amateur into contention at the Open yesterday

David Ashdown

end of the season. "My aim was to come out, have a good round and make the cut," Rose, who is 18 at the end of the month, said.

That is something that Els, the world No 2, and the defending champion Justin Leonard struggled to do. "At the end of the Open last year at Troon they had a sign up there saying: 'Well done, Justin' and that has stayed in my mind ever since," said the finest product of the North Hants club.

Rose quickly got over a three-putt bogey at the third by holing from 20 feet at the fourth and hitting a nine-iron to five feet at the next. He missed the green at the

fearsome sixth to drop a shot but holed from 50 feet at the ninth to be out in 33.

Four pars followed before Rose birdied the short 14th with a putt from 25 feet, although he gave it back at the 16th by finding a green-side bunker. It was his finish, however, that grabbed the attention. A seven-iron to 10 feet at the par-five 17th set up an eagle and then he boled from 20 feet at the last for his fifth birdies of the day.

"I'm still taking it in," Rose said. "I'm absolutely delighted. That's one of my best rounds and to play it in these circumstances is fantastic." One of his best?

"Well, actually, the best round probably."

"I guess I wasn't worried about the conditions. My caddy and I were choosing the right shots, I was thinking clearly, hitting the shots I wanted to hit and then boling the putts at the end of it."

Unlike Matt Kuchar, the US Amateur champion who finished highly at the US Masters and the US Open but missed the cut, and the British Amateur champion Sergio Garcia, Rose had to qualify. He was exempt from regionals after becoming the youngest Walker Cup player last August and was one of the leading qualifiers

at Hillside with rounds of 74 and 72.

After a double bogey at the second, which put him in danger of missing out, he turned to a local Hampshire journalist and said: "Don't worry."

"In hindsight, that was great preparation for this week," Rose said. "It was quite gruelling. The winds were at least as strong as this."

Earlier this year, Rose spent a week at Lake Nona with Faldo's coach, David Leadbetter, and the guru was highly impressed. "He was one of the best 17-year-olds I have ever seen," Leadbetter

said. "He has a fantastic future."

Watts was born in Montreal of an English father and a German mother but grew up in Oklahoma. He still has an uncle in Somerset but instead of playing his trade on the American or European tours but has played on the Japanese tour for the past five years.

In that time he has won 10 times on the circuit and can go through his round, shot by shot, in Japanese. That is the extent of his knowledge in the language and the description of his first seven holes would have taxed it to the limit.

He began bogey, birdie, birdie, double bogey, par, bogey, birdie. But

then he settled down and came home in two under. "Before I got here I was playing quite well but unfortunately Sunday, Monday and Tuesday did not give me any belief in the world that I could even make a birdie on this course," Watts, 32, said.

What was not up for discussion was what happened at the Fuji-Sankai Classic earlier this season when he deliberately hit two tee shots into the ocean to miss the cut. He was fined 200,000 yen and will be forced to miss the Japanese Open in the autumn. "I made a mistake," Watts said.

More Open reports, page 26

Daly does a wild thing again

BY ANDY FARRELL

JOHN DALY'S self-destructive streak reappeared at the 18th hole as golf's "Wild Thing" took a sextuple-bogey 10. Daly, the 1995 Open champion, missed the cut after finishing with a 78 for 11 over par as did his successor, Tom Lehman, while Justin Leonard was left on the bubble.

Daly, a recovering alcoholic, is no stranger to controversy or high numbers. Only in March, at the Bay Hill Classic, Daly had an 18, a score of 13 over par, when he hit six balls into a lake in trying to make a long

carry. Here, he took seven shots from sand.

Arriving at the final hole at five over par following birdies at each of the previous two holes, Daly needed a par to give himself a chance of avoiding the cut and qualifying for the last two rounds.

Daly's drive found the first fairway bunker on the right and his recovery found the next fairway 50 yards further on. He then took what was described by his playing partner Payne Stewart as "five swishes at the ball". The final swish found a greenside bunker from where he

chipped out to 10 feet and then two-putted.

Neither Daly, who made a rapid exit from the recorder's but, nor Stewart were certain what score to record on the hole. Stewart explained: "I said to John, 'I've got to put the number in here that's right. I can't just go with whatever you are saying.' He said: 'It doesn't matter, give me a 10'."

The third member of the group, Bernhard Langer, was called in to help clarify the matter. "Ten was what both Bernhard and I thought John had made," Stewart said.

"He was in reasonable shape before that, he was going to make the cut. He just hit the wrong shot. When you hit it in those bunkers, you just have to take your medicine. He was not a happy camper when he left here."

After a 73 on the opening day, Daly was always struggling in the high winds of yesterday, going to the turn in 37 before bogeying the short 14th. But those late birdies at the 16th and 17th gave him some hope of surviving the cut, but that was swiftly buried in the sand of the 18th hole.

EARLY SECOND-ROUND SCORES FROM ROYAL BIRKDALE				
137 B Watts (US) 68 69	143 B May (US) 70 73	K Hoshikawa (Japan) 72 73	G Day (US) 75 73	M A Jimenez (Sp) 73 78
138 J Rose 72 66	S Murayama (Japan) 70 73	146 R Davis (Aus) 76 70	P Senior (US) 71 77	152 H Clark 73 79
139 T Bjorn (Den) 68 71	S Lyle 71 72	M Campbell (NZ) 73 73	S McCarthy 73 75	153 F Nohlo (NZ) 76 77
140 O Love III (US) 67 73	R Allenby (Aus) 67 76	J Leonard (US) 73 73	S Ballesteros (Sp) 73 75	154 M Hallberg (Swe) 77 77
141 M O'Meara (US) 72 68	O Smyth 74 69	O Carter 71 75	B Langer (Ger) 74 75	155 O Lee 76 78
142 F Couples (US) 66 74	G Evans 69 74	I Woosnam 72 74	P Lawrie 73 76	156 S Armstrong 76 78
143 G Brand Jr 71 70	144 C Franco (Par) 71 73	G Chalmers (Aus) 71 75	R Bland 71 76	157 M Litton 75 80
144 O Dowd (US) 70 71	F Minozzi (Phi) 69 75	C Ricci (It) 72 74	T Watsons (US) 73 76	158 G Orr 78 78
145 V Singh (Phi) 67 74	M Long (NZ) 70 74	A McLardy (SA) 72 74	150 G Goosen (SA) 74 76	159 S Appleby (Aus) 76 80
146 R Russell 68 73	P Spoland (Swe) 72 72	A Oldcorn 75 71	T Letman (US) 71 79	158 P Hedblom (Swe) 76 82
147 L Janzen (US) 72 69	145 N Ozaki (Japan) 72 73	K Tomori (Japan) 75 71	O Shacklady 76 74	151 J Remsey (Fr) 77 82
148 T Wie (US) 72 69	I Garrido (Sp) 71 74	S Torrance 69 77	Lewell 73 78	152 Wickham 5 Ellington
149 S Dunlap (US) 72 69	A Collart 68 77	*O de Vooght (Bel) 70 76	J L. Guepy (Fr) 74 76	153 GB or Irish unless stated
150 L Roberts (US) 66 76	J M O'Sullivan (Sp) 73 72	147 7 Leves (Fr) 72 75	M Kuchar (US) 75 75	
151 S Luna (Sp) 70 72	O Hart (US) 73 72	B Davis 72 75	S Hoch (US) 73 77	
152 P Stewart (US) 71 71	M James 71 74	J Muggers (US) 73 74	C Pavia (US) 74 76	
153 S Stricker (US) 70 72	P Mitchellson (US) 71 74	P Price 72 75	151 S Kandiak (US) 74 77	
	S Sorever (Ger) 75 70	C Parry (Aus) 73 74	S Leaney (Aus) 75 76	
	S Thining (Den) 69 76	148 P Mitchellson 76 72	J Daly (US) 73 78	
	F Jacobson (Swe) 67 78	J Duront (US) 74 74	G Player (SA) 77 74	
		V Mizumaki (Japan) 71 77	M McGuire 74 77	

Celtic's wait ends as Venglos takes charge

FOOTBALL
BY GUY HODGSON

CELTIC SUPPORTERS who have watched with growing dismay as their Glasgow rivals, Rangers, have spent in excess of £20m this summer, had part of their wish list fulfilled yesterday, although whether they would be delighted is another matter.

Promised a substantial figure as a managerial successor to Wim Jansen - the name of Ruud Gullit was being bandied round the city yesterday morning - they got Jozef Venglos, whose high reputation as

a coach on the continent is tempered in this country after a less-than-distinguished spell at Aston Villa in the early Nineties.

The 62-year-old Slovakian was unveiled at a news conference at Parkhead yesterday, but, as Celtic's season begins on Wednesday with a Champions' League game against St Patrick's Athletic of Dublin, he initially will have to work in a consultancy capacity until a work permit is obtained. He is currently a coaching advisor to the world governing

body, Fifa, and technical director to Slovan Bratislava.

"Jozef has a wealth of experience and knowledge of coaching which is difficult to match in world football," the club's managing director, Fergus McCann, said. "He knows what it takes to win at the highest level, winning leagues and cups at national level and European Championships at international level, as well as taking Czechoslovakia to World Cup finals in Italia '90."

Nevertheless, his time in Britain

was memorable for its lack of success, when Villa finished 17th in the 1990-91 season, after which Venglos moved on to Fenerbahce in Turkey for two seasons. There is also a question mark about his fluency in English.

Derek Mountfield, who worked under Venglos at Villa, described it as a "very turbulent year", adding: "He was very good technically but because he didn't speak the language very well it was hard on the communications side of things. We

struggled because of that. It surprises me Celtic have gone for him."

Venglos, who has also coached the national teams of Australia, Malaysia, Oman, Slovakia and Czechoslovakia, did make a statement yesterday, although the English was rudimentary. "I could not resist the offer of the opportunity to coach a club that is embedded in world soccer's history," he said. "The chance to work with 13 internationals and so much potential still to achieve is an opportunity I rel-

ish." Venglos's appointment ends two months of searching for Celtic, who have been without a manager since Jansen resigned on 11 May, immediately after winning the Scottish League championship.

Several coaches were approached including Gerard Houllier, who chose to become joint manager at Liverpool on Thursday. In theory he is on a par with Roy Evans but a pointer to who is first among equals was revealed yesterday when Houllier appointed a fellow-Frenchman, Patrice Bergues, as first team coach.

The appointment leaves Evans in growing isolation. Ronnie Moran re-



Venglos: Parkhead bound

tired this week and Bergues's arrival may mean another departure. Jansen, the assistant manager, faces another drop down the pecking order, while Sammy Lee is also on the

WEEKEND REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • SHOPPING • TRAVEL



The Old Man and me

When I think of the man with whom I walked the same path for 50 years and more, the first qualities that spring to mind are those already well known and well publicised: compassion, care, courage, calmness, diplomacy, patience, tolerance, magnanimity, discipline, passionate devotion to justice, and fair play. Much has been said and written about these attributes; much more remains unsaid about this man who is one of the great figures of our century.

"Mdlala" ("old man"), as he and I call each other on informal occasions) does not fit comfortably into the category of the ordinary man. An important characteristic that runs like a thread through all facets of Mdlala's personality is that, once convinced of the correctness of a certain position, he internalises it and adopts it with passion. The courage of his conviction was powerfully and unambiguously proclaimed in his court address at the Rivonia Trial, when the ANC leadership were accused of plotting to overthrow the state. When in the face of a possible death sentence he proudly told the court: "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal that I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."



This statement is consistent with his formidable courage and determination which we had come to know so well during the Rivonia Trial. At our first legal consultation, our lawyers made clear to us the very real prospect of the death sentence. In subsequent discussions among ourselves, Mdlala set the tone. He said we should conduct it as a political trial and carry ourselves with dignity and pride. The eyes of our people and the world were upon us, and we dare not show weakness.

We could not rely on the Appeal Court to upset a death sentence. Only the struggle and international solidarity could save us from the gallows. Therefore, in the event of a death sentence, we should not lodge an appeal.

He spoke so powerfully and convincingly that it left little need for debate; we accepted his lead and prepared ourselves for the worst.

With a strong personality such as his, he does not like to lose - but he allows himself to be over-

Ahmed Kathrada (left) has been a friend of Nelson Mandela for 50 years, many of them spent behind bars on Robben Island. Here, on the occasion of the South African president's 80th birthday, he remembers the strengths and weaknesses, wisdom and contradictions that make up the leader and the man

ruled by the majority. It may take a long time, but in the end he accepts defeat with grace.

In prison, Mdlala's stubbornness was evident on other occasions, sometimes with a positive outcome. He was obsessed with the belief that everyone should study, and managed to persuade many of us to do so. But with his family members it was a little more than persuasion - it became a form of blackmail. When one seemed either reluctant, or slow, to carry out his admonitions he virtually prohibited her from visiting until she satisfied him that she was studying seriously. Today she is an academic.

Mdlala is not beyond invoking unorthodox (but honest) tactics to win. An example of this occurred at one of the end-of-year sports tournaments on Robben Island. He had been chosen by his team to play chess against Salim, a young man who had been a medical student at Wits. As in politics, Mdlala's every move is carefully thought out, slow and deliberate. At the end of the first day the game had

not finished, and the warder was asked to lock up the board in an empty cell overnight. As lock-up time was approaching on the second (or possibly the third) day, the game had still not finished. By that time, Salim was utterly worn out. He had neither the energy, the will, nor the desire to carry on for yet another day and he resorted to the only option open to him: abandon the unfinished game by conceding defeat. It was not so much a matter of the giant and the dwarf, nor the expert and the amateur. It was simply the combination of ability, an inexhaustible fount of energy, patience and determination against sheer fatigue and frustration. It was Mdlala's war of attrition.

During our long years of enforced isolation, our thirst for news, especially about the struggle, remained insatiable. While we never lost confidence in the ultimate victory of our cause, we constantly had to assess and balance the reports and rumours that trickled through to us. We could not afford to

allow ourselves to build high hopes based on exaggerated, unrealistic or grossly inaccurate news, as this could easily have led to disappointment and even a breakdown of morale.

Some over-enthusiastic MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe, Spear of the Nation, the armed wing of the ANC) cadres came to prison with assertions that during our long years of isolation we had lost touch with developments in ANC policy; we were told that the ANC goal was now the achievement of "People's Democracy and Socialism". It was at times such as these that the wisdom, cool head, realism and foresight of leaders like Mdlala were indispensable. He invariably brought the endless polemics down to earth.

After his hospitalisation at the end of 1985, the prison authorities did not bring Mdlala back to the communal cell the five of us had been occupying since our transfer to Pollsmoor, a high security

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No entry

Don't you forget about me: the final picture in our series of images taken at Battersea Dogs' Home in London

Tom Pileton

Paying for the BBC

Sir: The request for an increased licence fee by the BBC, whose agent recently banged at my door demanding proof that I had permission from the state to receive broadcasts, prompts me to register my protest at the continuation of this affront to the values of a democratic society.

In a free society one should not be required to seek permission from any source to receive a communication that another offers without charge. The charge that we must pay is increased, quite unnecessarily, by the expense of maintaining the offensive system of monitoring every household, investigating suspected evasion and prosecuting those who do not wish to pay.

A BBC that takes money from our pockets to broadcast lottery draws and snooker marathons cannot use John Birt's claim of being a "civilising force" as justification. If we must be taxed to support this media giant let it be through general taxation that does not hurt the poor most. And let it be for one TV channel and perhaps two radio stations only. If the Corporation can show that it is capable of filling these with "civilising" material 24 hours of each day, perhaps greater generosity might merit consideration.

JOHN PRATT
London SE23

Sir: As an American who has been living in Britain for many years, I feel compelled to respond to Suzanne Moore's comments on the BBC ("Why do we fund this Bland, Boring, Complacent hunch?", 17 July). The people of Britain should go down on their knees and thank God for the BBC and the licence fee every day.

The most important advantage of a licence-fee funded TV service is the lack of advertisements on

the BBC, which also forces the commercial channels to limit the amount of time they devote to ads. The horror of American TV is its commercial breaks about every five or six minutes. Ms Moore mentions *The Third Rock from the Sun*. The next time she watches it, I suggest she think about what it would be like were there a couple of minutes of insane drivel every time the story comes to one of the four or five obvious "break" points embedded into the plot.

Ms Moore mentions golf. Golf and tennis lend themselves to a high frequency of commercials. But here in the UK, one gets to watch the whole game uninterrupted. It's a dream. Why do you think Americans are not interested in football/soccer? It lacks the intrinsic breaks every few minutes which are the prerequisite for a sport to be viable on untrammelled commercial TV, so no US network has any interest in showing it, or supporting it financially.

There is no longer any real news on American TV. There is a lot on celebrity lifestyle, child pornography, cures for obesity, murders. But not news. News does not sell toothpaste. I watch *Panorama* and *Newsnight* and practically weep with gratitude.

PHIL AARONSON
Surrey

Orange 'demons'

Sir: C Padley (Letters, 16 July) talks about the Orangemen in Northern Ireland as victims of demonisation. No other Northern Irish group systematically and

annually demonises their supposed enemies as do members of the Orange Order.

What is needed in Northern Ireland is a Truth and Reconciliation Commission similar to that in South Africa. Then the demons of Irish history could be brought out into the open, exorcised and renounced by all who have nurtured hatred by continually whipping up the past.

KATHLEEN KINDER
Giggleswick, North Yorkshire

Sir: David McKittick's analogy (Comment, 15 July) between Drumcree and the Alamo may be a dangerous one. I quote from a book by my late father, Professor John A Hawgood (*The American West*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967):

"The heroic resistance by small groups of Americans cut off at the Alamo in San Antonio and in Goliad, and their massacre by superior Mexican forces, hardened the resistance of the insurgent Americans and helped to lead them to their eventual victory on the field on San Jacinto, where Sam Houston's amateur soldiers defeated Santa Anna's professionals, captured the proud Mexican dictator and sent him as a gift to President Andrew Jackson."

Who might play the parts of Santa Anna and Sam Houston if history does repeat itself - Mo Mowlam and Ian Paisley? The mind boggles.

JOHN HAWGOOD
Durham

Sir: Orange Order leaders insist that their marches should take

place because they have done so for hundreds of years. I am reminded of a saying of Voltaire's: "Il n'y a rien de si vénérable qu'un ancien abus." ("There is nothing so venerable as an ancient abuse.")

ELEANOR AITKEN
Bournemouth, Dorset

What patients want

Sir: Your leading article (16 July) beseeching Frank Dobson to forget his obsession with NHS waiting lists is, in my view, misplaced.

Ask the patients what they would like from their health service and it would probably be: (1) to see my GP quickly; (2) if a hospital consultation is necessary, to be seen quickly; (3) to be investigated quickly; (4) to be admitted quickly; and finally (5) once admitted, to be looked after by skilled and caring professionals. Only step 5 does not relate to waiting lists.

I practise as a GP every day I have to decide whom to refer and with how much urgency. If too many patients are "urgent" it becomes difficult to have routine patients seen. Patients are sent to specialists for a variety of reasons, including the wish to have a specialist consultation about a difficult problem. One of our hospitals has a 94-week waiting list for routine orthopaedic outpatient appointments. You cannot have useful specialist advice if a wait of almost two years is involved.

Waiting lists grow out of control as urgent, fairly urgent and non-

urgent cases are added. The first two categories take precedence over the non-urgent and the latter is pushed further and further down the list. Just as you reach the top some urgent cases displace you.

Waiting is one of the core inactivities of the NHS. The Patient's Charter set a standard which was helpful although sometimes difficult to achieve. Money can be used to shorten the longest waits to manageable proportions. Use it wisely and both the patients and doctors will thank Mr Dobson at the ballot box.

PETER H BRUNYATE
Chippingham, Wiltshire

Lennon in Prague

Sir: Radha Burgess's romanticisation of the Lennon threat to Prague's beauty ("Lennon rises again on Prague graffiti wall", 17 July).

As a regular visitor to Prague in the 1980s, I cannot remember the Lennon mural being daily obliterated and nightly restored by daring graffiti artists. Like so much in the tired Czechoslovak totalitarian *fin-de-siècle* the wall was generally left alone.

However, the cult of the Lennon wall plays its part in legitimising today's rampant spray-paint problem. All over the city acrylic spray paints are causing irreparable damage to stone walls. Wandering around Prague last month was a hithering disillusioning experience. Every wall seems painted with the same sort of gormless initials and

English-language obscenities.

Even historical monuments are desecrated, like the base of the statue of Jan Hus in the Old Town Square. The scores of composite international tourist youth who squat on the steps at its base in their identikit grunge seem to revel in the ugliness of it all. Whether their parents' generation - the sort of tourists who might inject real cash into the floundering Czech economy - will feel happy to visit a city disfigured by the sort of visual sleaze associated with petty crime and drug abuse in societies where the market economy has been long established must be open to doubt.

Prague cannot be kept as a museum, but if it loses its old charm without gaining any new beauty or style, then it will be pure loss - for Czechs and foreigners alike.

MARK ALMOND
Oriel College, Oxford

Desert island risks

Sir: If my father had been Home Secretary and I had selected for his *Desert Island Discs* "Get off my cloud" (Rolling Stones), "California Dreaming" (Mamas and Papas) or "No Woman No Cry" (Bob Marley), the sillier press of the time might easily have insinuated that I had set the old man up by choosing songs or singers associated with drugs. (Thirty years on, I did choose these records for my own *Desert Island* exile.) My children did not embarrass me by their choice of "History" by The Verve. Nor am I

so out of touch as to have been taken by surprise by the lyrics. Being the child of someone in the public eye is never easy. It is, however, made much more difficult when wholly erroneous assumptions are turned into hard fact, as Glenda Cooper did in her feature ("You're an embarrassment", 14 July).

JACK STRAW
Home Secretary
Home Office
London SW1

IN BRIEF

Sir: "The newest [women] authors have no public profile, unlike their male contemporaries, and no clout within 'social' media circles," moans Bidisha (Comment, 16 July). Has she ever heard of the Orange Prize, Virago, the Women's Press, Sisterwrite, Silver Moon, even *Woman's Hour* and the countless media outlets promoting women's topics? There are no literary prizes, publishing houses, bookshops or radio programmes devoted exclusively to men writers.

From the Victorian period on, women have always distinguished themselves in literary circles, providing a uniquely creative contribution, probably surpassing that of male writers. Such victim-whingeing does Bidisha's cause no good at all.

ALISTAIR SHEARER
London SW5

Sir: Your technology editor informs us ("The truth about Viagra and erections", 17 July) that men achieve erections through the vital action of nitrous oxide (NO). "The NO relaxes specific muscles and blood vessels at the base of the penis, and allows blood to flow in," he writes. Does this prove once and for all that NO really does mean yes?

STEFAN STERN
London SW2

The Old Man and me

Continued from page 1

prison near Cape Town. Instead they isolated him in a cell away from us.

Our first reaction was to protest against his isolation and take some sort of action against what we regarded as punishment. But Mdala prevailed upon us not to do anything, adding that it might all turn out for the good. I have since come to believe that he must have made up his mind then to use his isolation to kick-start the negotiation process. But at the time he kept his cards close to his chest. He chose to act independently, possibly because he did not want to be hampered by long, drawn-out polemics, and opposition. As it turned out, when he was eventually allowed to consult us individually, he got lukewarm support from Walter Sisulu and firm opposition from Kathrada.

Only after he unilaterally took the first tentative step in that direction did he begin to consult us and keep us informed of developments.

Mdala sought no special status for himself, the fact that he was singled out by prison officials and visiting dignitaries was not of his making. He always went out of his way to be treated like every other prisoner and suffered the resultant negative consequences, at times more than the others. Mdala stood with us in every aspect of prison life, through the bad and through the good. He was offered better clothing and better food by the authorities; he refused. He was offered exemption from pick-and-shovel work at the quarry; he refused. Some colleagues suggested that, as our leader, he should not be participating

in work such as polishing floors, cleaning the toilets, and so on; he refused, adding that in carrying out prison tasks there were no leaders: all were equal. Thus, on our weekly cleaning days, he was with the rest of us, taking part fully in the chores.

In 1974, almost the entire prison population of Robben Island went down with flu. Of the 25-odd prisoners in our section only Mdala and three new arrivals did not succumb and were still on their feet. Every morning he and the three colleagues went from cell to cell, collected, emptied and washed the toilet buckets and put them out in the sun. He also helped take food and water to each cell. A number of times we resorted to hunger-strike action - the ultimate weapon of prisoners. ANC policy was to exempt the elderly and the sickly. Mdala refused to be exempted; he was with us in the "trenches", which he considered his rightful place.

The quality of concern for those around him is strong in Mdala. Not only does he know members of his large staff by name, in many cases he also knows the names of their spouses and children. He often invites individual staff members, and sometimes their families, to join him for a meal.

Mdala has a well-deserved reputation for being level-headed, cool and unflappable. It is virtually impossible to gauge his inner emotions; by and large they remain inscrutable. He felt deep hurt and sorrow

at the deaths of his mother and his son and must have been greatly affected and angered by the harassment that his family experienced at the hands of the police. But he never showed it. Not for a single day did he allow his feelings to interfere with or overshadow his responsibilities towards his fellow prisoners.

Essentially, he has a cool temperament, one seldom given to excitement. Another prison incident illustrates this - and is an indication of how exasperating it can be sometimes. We always looked forward to visits. Apart from their primary value as a means of keeping close to families and friends, they offered possibilities for picking up snippets of information, especially about the ANC. Mdala's visits were particularly valuable in this regard.

One day, in January 1985, he was called to the office and as usual we eagerly awaited his return. After a while he came back, greeted us, then went straight to his desk and hustled himself. Later he called us together and calmly informed us that he had been told that President Botha had offered to release him and all political prisoners if we undertook not to indulge in violence. They wanted our reply within a specified time. We did not have to debate the offer; the condition attached was completely unacceptable. We drafted our reply rejecting it.

Mdala is a proud man and not without

a touch of vanity. By the time he went underground in 1961, his most recognisable feature was his beard. Photos of the bearded Mandela had appeared in newspapers and leaflets. I was among the small group who had been charged with organising every aspect of his underground life. We found safe houses and premises for secret meetings; arranged for regular contact with his family; provided transport within or away from Johannesburg; organised meetings with selected media people, and so on. To facilitate this, an essential requirement was that he be disguised and transformed into a "new man". Among other things he had to forsake his stylish and expensive clothing. But above all he had to shave his beard. He agreed to most suggestions but simply refused to shave. He must have known how the beard enhanced his looks and personality.

We regarded this de-bearding as absolutely essential but couldn't persuade him. It must be remembered that the security forces had launched a countrywide hunt for him, setting up roadblocks, stopping vehicles at random, searching houses, questioning people. Not for nothing was he dubbed the "Black Pimpernel". There were close shaves, and a couple of occasions when we were convinced he had been recognised by members of the public. But the beard remained. It was there when photos taken in an Algerian army camp ap-

peared in the press. And it was still there when he was eventually arrested in Howick on August 5, 1962.

We were to come across other examples of this streak in his personality. His insistence at Pollsmoor prison that he had to have a certain brand of hair oil, and no substitute, became an issue of considerable importance to him. We dubbed it "the Pantene crisis". The prison warders searched for it high and low but Mdala would not accept that it was not available. I think he even complained to Mrs Helen Suzman, and this led to a renewed search. At last Chief Warden Brand managed to locate the last remaining stock of Pantene at some pharmacy. We were saved from another call to "action".

In prison, there were some relatively minor incidents that may add another and perhaps contradictory dimension to our understanding of Mdala's personality. In 1982, when five of us were transferred to Pollsmoor, it was the first time since our arrest that we were put together in a communal cell. We were able to observe one another's habits and, where necessary, adjust to the novel situation. We were generally early risers but Mdala was earlier than us and started with his exercises. We had no problem with this, and not even with his running-on-the-spot; but we did object when he extended this to running around the cell.

On Robben Island, Mdala refused to kill the ants that invaded his and many of our cells, or the bees that hovered around us with threatening gestures. But then he did kill plenty of flies to feed the hungry chameleon that somehow strayed into our garden. And he took an active part in putting to death a seal that beached itself while we were working at the seaside on Robben Island and subsequently helping to skin it with glass from broken bottles and getting it ready for our cooks.

This may be considered but a minor contradiction in his complex personality. While he has generally an enlightened approach to the practices, demands and problems of modern society, he is careful not to stray too far from many of the requirements of traditional life.

There are questions that still loom large. Do we have a well-rounded, complete picture of the man? Saint-like qualities are there in abundance; but can he be described as a saint? Like all human beings, Mdala is not free of shortcomings, weaknesses and failings. He is an uncommon amalgam of the peasant and the aristocrat, the democrat par excellence, but not without a touch of the autocrat; at once proud and simple; soft and tenacious; determinedly obstinate and flexible; vain and shy; cool and impatient.

I've said all I can, for now. There can be no claim to objectivity in this article; written as it is by one who unapologetically has a profound respect, admiration and fondness for Mdala. Yet I hope it will make some slight contribution towards a fuller picture of the man.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Why Scotland should worry New Labour

TONY BLAIR travelled to the country of his birth yesterday to try to rescue a dreadful political mess, in which he and his Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, have been comprehensively outflanked by Alex Salmond.

The Scottish National Party leader is a class act: the only politician who can consistently beat the Prime Minister at the populist game. Like Mr Blair, he instinctively understands public opinion. But part of the explanation for Mr Salmond's success is that he has his finger on the pulse of a different public. Scottish public opinion, educated in its own schools and speaking through its own media, is quite distinct from English.

New Labour's latest assault on the SNP, claiming its "socialist" policies will offend "Middle Scotland", reveals its tin ear for the country's political dialect. As far as most Scots are concerned, Middle Scotland is the bit around and between Glasgow and Edinburgh. There is no great gulf between the values of "Labour's traditional base" and the "Scottish middle class". They are one and the same. Scotland is a more cohesive, social-democratic society than England.

Mr Blair's very newness, the secret of his exceptional popularity in England, is also the secret of his relative failure north of the border. There were two things the Scots really did not like about the Conservative party of Thatcher and Major: its right-wing values and its south-east Englishness. These alleged faults attach themselves to New Labour too, albeit not to the same degree. And Mr Salmond has exploited them with a slick professionalism that would make Milbank Tower blush. The man who gave us "independence within Europe", making the SNP vote both safe and modern, yesterday accused the Scottish Labour Party of being a "branch office" which, in a sense, it is.

Labour's mistake was not its policy of devolution, but its casual assumption that a parliament in Edinburgh would be a quick fix for what it thought of as "the Scottish problem". But Mr Blair should not panic. Scottish voters may use next year's elections as a kind of giant by-election, an excuse for a protest hiest of Scottishness. But that will not mean they are ready to vote for independence - yet. A majority may tell opinion pollsters they would do so, but opinion poll answers are notoriously subject to pocketbook pressures. English voters tell folk with clipboards they want to pay higher taxes for better services when they do not, and the Scots are not so different as all that. Faced with higher taxes for the same services, Scots will hesitate.

Mr Blair should worry, however, and not underestimate the growing desire for statehood, especially among the young. Meanwhile, the Labour Party has yet to face up squarely to the inefficiency, corruption and political

gangsterism which dominates Scottish local councils. When it has done so, the party in Scotland will need to recast its relationship with London in a confederate structure. Thus may Labour benefit from its Scottish scare and it will do the Scottish people good to consider independence as a real possibility.

The traditional English response to Scottish separatism - "let them have it if they want it" - is patronising indifference dressed up as a statement of the obvious. A union of two countries is like a marriage. Of course, if one partner really wants a divorce, they can have it, but that does not mean the other partner should be indifferent. The English have got to understand - and Labour with its strong Scottish base is well-placed to help them do so - that Scotland is not just an accidental appendage, but a partner in the joint venture of Britishness. It is a strange historical construct, but a valuable one. Scottish independence would bring both costs and benefits to the Scots, but it would only diminish the English.

Russia's inability to bury its past

LAYING BONES is easier than laying ghosts. Yesterday's burial - or rather re-burial - of the bodies of Tsar Nicholas II and his family in St Petersburg, should perhaps have been a moment for Russia to come to terms with its past, or at least to reconnect with its old past.

And indeed it was. The fact that the last of the Romanov rulers, together with his wife, three of his daughters, the family doctor and three servants were disinterred, genetically tested and given the full pomp and glory of a state funeral, would have been impossible a few years ago. Yet the arguments and antics of the President, Boris Yeltsin, all served to show the occasion for what it was - farcical, inconclusive and slightly undignified.

How could it be otherwise, considering the past Russia has been trying to forget, and the

Tsardom it was trying to remember? Ours has been a century that has found it peculiarly difficult to come to terms with itself. Auschwitz, Katyn, Srebrenica, Cambodia - sometimes it has been as though each generation is condemned perpetually to approach the past by digging up the bones of the massacred and re-interring them.

For Russia, it has been harder than most. They won the Great Patriotic War of 1941-5, yet that glory has been sullied by the re-appraisal of Marshall Stalin, who led them to victory. Their role as first communist country and world heacon of socialism has been tarnished by the revelation of the blood, deceit and hypocrisy with which the Soviet regime constructed it.

Nostalgia for the Tsars is not going to wipe this away. Russia has little reason to remember the Romanovs with pride, except as symbols of nationalism in foreign conquests. As figureheads, they served as well against Napoleon as against the Prussians. As rulers, they left the country in a semi-feudalist

state, backward in its economy, corrupt in its government and oppressive in its bureaucracy.

Little has changed. The communist party and the Soviet Union proved to be the masks by which the new rulers pursued the same set of expansion abroad, and dictatorship at home, as their predecessors. Indeed, many would argue that Lenin, Stalin and the Presidents who succeeded them were little more than Tsars in workmen's clothing, leaving the country with the same problems of backwardness, inefficiency and oppressive bureaucracy that had characterised the preceding century.

It is comparatively easy for Britain, which lost an empire by pretending that it remained a world power. But for Russia, short of empire and now told to shed every illusion, there needs to be some understanding from outside. Thank heaven the funeral of the last of Tsars did not go off with even greater popular fervour. The world does not need a Russia dreaming of imperial glory again. Or yearning for the old dictatorship.



The bitter reality of life on the edge of a sectarian swamp

I HAD PLANNED to write about something different this time. I feared that three consecutive weeks devoted to Northern Ireland might begin to look like a columnist's monomania. But after the week we have been through, after the horror of Ballymoney and the subsequent collapse of Drumcree, I know there is nothing else I want to write about. It was the week the tribals sickened us with murder, the week of bitter fighting and weasel words, the week of hatred and tears, and most of all, the most important week since the Troubles began.

Those who have reported Northern Ireland down the years know better than to create a pecking order of atrocities. There should be no league table of cruelty. Bloody Sunday, Bloody Friday, the fireball of La Mon House, Enniskillen, the Shankill Butchers. The list of horror would take pages to recall. There are more than three thousand deaths - each one a story of pain for somebody.

And yet I sense that with the murders of the three Quinn boys some terrible watershed has been passed. What kind of island is this, we ask, where children burn for the madness of adults?

I guess that is a question many of the Orangemen at Drumcree were asking themselves as they packed up to go home. As one of them put it to me, simply: "I am sick to my heart."

There was something tired and defeated about most of the Orangemen I spoke to this week. They were shocked by the murders, it is true. But the overriding impression is one of confusion. There was simply no map for this situation, and no amount of spin from David Jones or Ian Paisley about the "real" cause of the murders was going to make them feel any bet-

ter. Jones battled frantically all week to keep the cause alive, ploughing on with remarkable insensitivity while the majority of Orangemen deserted the cause of Drumcree in their droves.

I spent the week in a small town in West Tyrone, close to the border with the Irish Republic. This is a place where Protestants have long felt themselves besieged by the forces of nationalism. Out there on the fringe of the Union, Protestants have always understood the imperative of group solidarity.

But Drumcree and the Quinn murders have changed everything. The unionist family here, as in so much of the province, is more divided than it has ever been.

Throughout the week local moderates have been publicly abused. The word "traitor" is regularly shouted at pro-Trimble politicians. But for once in the history of unionism, that bitter epithet has lost its powerful resonance. We know that the only betrayal now is on the part of those willing to threaten the hope of peace for the cause of tribalism.

To many people in Britain the language and principles of hardline Orangism are incomprehensible. After the Quinn murders, I suspect the majority of British people have moved from being perplexed by the rituals to profound antipathy towards the Order's actions.

The cause of the Union to which people like David Jones swear such loyalty has been badly damaged. If the mainlanders had little enough time for the idea of a British Ulster, they have far less now.



FERGAL KEANE
What kind of Ireland is this where children burn for the madness of adults?

abuse and brandished his broily at moderate Orangemen earlier this week, he saw himself as a defender of the faith and the protestant people. You may find that extraordinary, but don't for a moment doubt his sincerity.

Four years ago I spent several weeks in Joel Patten's company. I was making a film about protestant identity. One evening, coming towards the end of our filming, Joel produced a set of maps and set them out on a coffee table. The maps showed the streets of a small Armagh village from which Joel believed Protestants were being ethnically cleansed by the IRA.

He had colour-coded each building according to religion. If memory serves me well, the Catholic houses were green, the Protestant ones blue. The green shade was spreading, annexing Protestant territory. As Joel outlined the various murders of Protestants that had taken place, I had the feeling that I was listening to a conversation from the 17th century: the

fearful planter surrounded by the wily, hostile natives.

We walked around the town. Joel pointing out the buildings that had been "lost" to the Catholics. He showed me his local Orange Hall, recently firebombed by nationalists.

The final part of our film involved a debate between Joel and some of his colleagues and a group of Catholics from the south. Most of the southerners had never travelled north before. When Joel came into meet them, he conspicuously avoided shaking hands. The debate was reasonably civil and relaxed until I asked one of the southerners if he accepted Joel's right to be British. His answer was immediate and blunt: "If you are born on the island of Ireland you are Irish. They are Irish."

Joel immediately erupted. "You see. There it is. Just what I have been trying to explain. You are trying to tell me what my identity is," he snapped. The argument went on and on, with no hint of accommodation on either side. And yet when it finished I remember Joel standing and drinking tea with the southerners. By no stretch of the imagination could one say he was friendly towards them, but he did stay and talk and listen.

In the wake of Drumcree it is hard to imagine Joel Patten or any other hardliner agreeing to drink tea with southern Catholics, let alone discuss the future of Ulster with them. The hardline faction will not have been given cause for doubt or self-questioning by the events of the past week. If anything, they will regard themselves as more put upon, more righteous in their cause.

When I ran into Joel in the field at Drumcree, he told me the march along the Garvaghy Road was a make-

or-break issue for Protestants. And he made no secret of the fact that David Trimble was his ultimate target. Joel's candour convinced me that Drumcree was as much about destroying the moderates as it was about a sacred right to march.

The hardliners have suffered a serious defeat at Drumcree, but they will not go away. Already they are preparing for the next big battle; the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.

This is an issue which strikes a much deeper chord with the Protestant community than the right to march down the Garvaghy Road. It is an issue on which Trimble cannot afford to be seen to concede. The courage he showed in calling for the Orangemen to quit Drumcree will have its price.

One pro-Trimble assemblyman told me the Ulster Unionists would be committing suicide if they went into government with Sinn Fein without some real movement on decommissioning. "There is no way I or anybody else who is pro-agreement could back David on that," he said.

I believe him. If Trimble were to back down on decommissioning, an already divided party would more than likely collapse, bringing the Assembly down with it.

And so the focus swings back to Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. Giving any credit to unionists may be difficult for them, but they must surely recognise Trimble's courage. If they can go one step further and encourage the IRA to make a practical gesture on decommissioning then the moderates on the unionist side will be able to ignore the bitter taunts of traitor. And without Trimble and his moderates there is no solution, only a return to the sectarian swamp.

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JAPANESE ELECTION

Reactions to the ruling party's heavy defeat
and the resignation of Ryutaro HashimotoMAINICHI SHIMBUN
Japan

"Voters had vented their anger at the failed economic policies of Hashimoto's Cabinet and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). We feel, therefore, that it is only fitting that the prime minister should resign. The LDP has already begun the process of selecting a successor to Hashimoto. Japan needs to respond immediately to its economic crisis and cannot allow a political vacuum to develop.

After passing emergency economic and financial legislation during the extraordinary Diet session, the new Cabinet must dissolve the Diet and hold early elections in order to win the confidence of the people. The new Cabinet should be content to manage the economic crisis and prepare for the next election."

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
Australia

"There is the question of political leadership - or rather the lack of it. In Japan, politicians act like frontmen for bureaucrats who are themselves averse to reform because it might loosen their grip on power or upset vested interests.

Trying to pursue structural reform, eliminate trade barriers or stimulate domestic demand can be like trying to make water flow uphill. That is one reason why Japan is about to have its tenth prime minister in nine years."

THE MIAMI HERALD
United States

"Doomsday comes when Japan's economy collapses. Such is today's global economy: Japan twitches, Southeast Asia teeters, and South Floridians suddenly have reason to cringe at what might come next. On the optimistic side, Japanese voters sent a clear message to their leaders and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party: Right the economy! So what does happen next? It is by no means certain that Japanese voters, though clearly ready for action, have been prepared for painful action."

THE STRAITS TIMES
Singapore

"The vote is a protest, and a warning. Japan is being administered as if the economic crisis were but a passing phase, an aberration which the institutionalized practices of post-war Japan would absorb. But this recession is different. Japan's economy needs structural reforms, not cosmetic tinkering, if the changes initiated by the promised bridge bank scheme and tax cuts are to be sustained."

LA REPUBBLICA
Italy

"The resignation of Hashimoto is followed by a series of question marks. Japan can only solve its crisis if it understands the meaning of this vote. Japanese people expect more pervasive reforms to revive the country's economy."

LABOUR AND SCOTLAND

The Scottish press on the dwindling support
for New LabourEDINBURGH
EVENING NEWS

Tony Blair arrived in Edinburgh today asking the Scots to trust him and his party. Voters would be right to ask, why? There's no doubt why Mr Blair is here today - to bolster his party's position. No amount of spin-doctoring will help. He must tackle the Nationalist threat, but before he does he must first lance the boil of sleaze, real or imaginary. Only then will people answer his call to trust Labour in Scotland again.

DAILY RECORD

"He may have won the vote of Middle England, that heartland of village greens and Tory ladies in tweed and pearls. But Tony Blair is going to find himself hard pushed to do the same with what he calls Middle Scotland. For a start he'll have trouble finding it. Scotland is hardly packed with twee

villages filled with gleaming Volvos and smug yuppies who still hanker after the days of Mrs Thatcher."

SCOTTISH
DAILY MAIL

When Tony Blair launches a new charm offensive in Scotland today he will effectively be firing the first shots in Labour's campaign for next year's Scottish parliamentary elections. He would be wise not to underestimate the challenges which he and his party faces. He now faces an electorate more critical than that in the south. Hence his vow to win the hearts and minds of "Middle Scotland" - which certainly exists, yet such a phrase sits uncomfortably with Scottish self-perception. When the Prime Minister arrives here, he should recognise that the retention of Scotland as a voluntary and vital partner in the Union is his most urgent priority.

Two cheers for
Chancellor Brown

THE MIRROR

Mr Brown and Tony Blair - for this was a joint effort - have proved beyond doubt that this Government's heart is in the right place. It genuinely wants the proper care for the nation's sick and its children. And it is prepared to back that belief with hard cash. But the Chancellor must not be over-worried about raising the pay of nurses - and teachers and doctors too. They must be properly rewarded so they WANT to do their jobs. We trust that this commitment to health and education will work. At the price being paid, it must.

DAILY
TELEGRAPH

The Prime Minister emerges from the CSR looking sidelined. Middle Britain got short shrift when Mr Brown excluded all those with personal pensions from his uprating of the basic state pension. That was hardly New Labour, particularly if it

PUBLIC SPENDING

Verdicts on Gordon Brown's comprehensive
spending review

presages means-testing for the basic pension, as the Tories suspect. Meanwhile, ministers will answer to Number 11 Downing Street almost as much as to Number 10, and backbenchers will be encouraged to see Mr Brown, rather than Tony Blair, as the custodian of old Labour's "caring" tradition.

THE ECONOMIST

What does emerge from this exercise, however, is an element of political clarity. Rather than pulling off a piece of radical magic, Labour is simply offering itself as a government willing to raise the share of the economy devoted to public spending. It is willing to do so more than the Tories would, but less than the Liberal Democrats. And, if Mr Brown is to be taken at his fiscal word, it is a govern-

ment willing if necessary to raise taxes to finance this extra spending though not, on current evidence, in novel and desirable ways such as special taxes earmarked for health or schools, or greater imposition of user fees.

DAILY MAIL

What is beyond question is that the political position of this formidably ambitious Chancellor remains tantalisingly complex. This self-proclaimed moderniser was only too keen to present himself as a big spender in the old Labour tradition. The truth is that he is taking a worrying gamble by boosting public expenditure just when private enterprise is finding it harder to deliver the goods. But then, Mr Brown is not only obsessed by balancing the books, he is also playing for the highest stakes of all.

FINANCIAL
TIMES

Labour needed to show that it was doing something positive with power besides trying to run prudent monetary and fiscal policies and to reduce unemployment. Moreover, after severe squeezes under the Conservative's, health and education need more money if they are to meet the legitimate aspirations of a prosperous nation. Within these limitations, the Government has done a creditable job in attempting to combine improved services with a prudent overall stance.

THE GUARDIAN

Most people will be stunned by the debt way Brown is combining high spending in key areas with help for the poor and a budget surplus. If Treasury claims that there are no "smoking guns" turns out to be true, the statement could turn out to be a defining moment for New Labour.

NELSON MANDELA AT 80

The South African press reflect on their
President's life and career

THE STAR

There is little doubt that he will forever be remembered as one of the great South Africans, possibly the greatest of our current history. He will be remembered as one of the world's great leaders, not because of a show of force like Attila the Hun or Genghis Khan, nor for the size of his empire like a Caesar or Alexander the Great. He is honoured for being the man who united a deeply divided country around his personality, with reason, logic, conciliation, charm and intellect.

CAPE ARGUS

Unashamedly celebratory events like this one run the risk of being self-defeating. Nelson Mandela has come to symbolise all that is and can be good about South Africa, the beloved country still struggling to come to terms with the wounds of centuries. Mandela is fond of saying that it is not the kings and generals who make history, but the masses of ordinary people. That is true, but in this case one feels they could not have done it without him.

MAIL & GUARDIAN

Mandela's legacy to the nation is quite specific. The moment produces the man and he will be remembered above all for that moment on May 11, 1994, when he took the salute from the armed forces in the fore-court of the Union Building; one man, armed with 27 years of silence, who destroyed an ideology. From log cabin to the White House, from mud hut to the Union Buildings. One thinks back over the 80 years which have been the life of Nelson Mandela and marvels at the power of lost innocence.

DEATH OF DICK MCDONALD

Opinion on the death of a burger king

NEW YORK TIMES
United States

From a single hamburger stand in San Bernardino, the systematized approach the McDonald brothers developed to offer customers reasonably priced food at a rapid pace formed the cornerstone of the fast-food business.

the war, as proliferating freeways increased customers' interest in speed of service, they decided to update.

THE SCOTSMAN
UK

The golden arches symbolised the success of a man who created one of the most enduring brands of the 20th century. Dick and his brother, Maurice "Mac" McDonald, created a drive-in restaurant. From humble beginnings, serving 15-cent hamburgers and cheeseburgers, the idea evolved into McDonald's. The father of the burger chain industry leaves behind him a marketing genius and entrepreneurial spirit that came to epitomise the USA.

LA TIMES
United States

Dick McDonald was the man who first sketched the gold arches that have become the chain's internationally recognized icon. The two brothers started out with a barbecue, car-bop restaurant in San Bernardino in 1940. But after

MISCELLANEOUS

Stories from around the world

WEEKLY WORLD
NEWS
United States

Married men: If you had it to do all over again, would you marry the same woman?

An international poll shows that most men would. Here's how it breaks down according to nationality: 66 per cent of Japanese men would ask the same gal to be their bride. So would 79 per cent of Polish men. 86 per cent of French guys would re-walk that aisle with their current spouse. And a whopping 93 per cent of American men would wed the same woman.

that laziness is the real cause of our lack of productivity, unless, of course, we are talking about mental laziness. It is probably true to say that the low productivity of workers in Jamaica is mostly due to bad management.

Jamaicans always do best when they are under heavy manners. That's why they do so well abroad.

THE YEMEN
TIMES
Yemen

The regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh regularly pays people to buy their loyalty. For example, the President regularly pays local and foreign journalists to write nicely about his "achievements". This is a bad policy. If loyalty has a price, he should see that there are others who can pay better than him. The point is, if the system functions properly, it would not need to do this.

JAMAICA GLEANER
Jamaica

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Roger Clarke, told his audience at the annual meeting of the Jamaica Agricultural Society that "Jamaicans are the laziest people on earth." He has got a point, but don't think

FILM OF THE WEEK
GODZILLADAILY YOMIURI
Japan

It has been torn asunder, the remains are barely recognisable; its former glory and power are now distant memories. This new version lacks the magic of its predecessors. It's an uneven escapade that leaves one dazed and dismayed. This Godzilla lacks a sense of potent drama; it's mainly a series of monotonous mayhem and characters, human or otherwise, who are terribly disappointing.

LA TIMES
United States

The spectacle that is Godzilla is simply stupendous, yet the film never loses either momentum or its human scale. Enmerich projects his vision of Godzilla's path of destruction



so forcefully that you buy into its credibility with ease. Godzilla, which delivers unpretentious fun with a blithe spirit, will surely give that box-office behemoth Titanic a healthy run for its money.

EVENING
STANDARD
UK

There is nothing wrong with big dumb movies. And they don't come much dumber than

Godzilla - but there is a curious anomaly between the catchline "size does matter" and the "reality" of the film. Because the one thing you don't take away from this two-hours plus of a monster movie is any awesome memory of scale.

SALON MAGAZINE
Internet

Watching Godzilla is like being inside a two-hour train wreck - the monster's sheer scale, the ear-shattering soundtrack (dominated by the sound of cars exploding on to sidewalks after being dropped from ten storeys up), the super-fast tracking camera work and computer-graphic wizardry, operate on you like a drug - a weirdly lucky one, but with undeniable cheesy, short-term addictive power.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"Who was it who said a temptation resisted is a true measure of character? Certainly not one in Beverly Hills!"
Joan Collins

"Your voice is like a foghorn. Keep it down!"
A Commons official rebuking Charlie Whelan, Press Officer to the Chancellor

"All my life until now, I've either been married or living with someone. I think it was just habit, like using the same handbag every day!"
TV personality Janet Street-Porter

"I have had an opportunity to discuss politics with her at length and she still has a brilliant mind!"
Rod Hull on Baroness Thatcher

"Hospitals are dangerous places!"
Health Secretary Frank Dobson

"When you think about it, kissing is pretty disgusting. The human mouth is one of the dirtiest things on this planet - a dog's mouth is much cleaner!"
Hollywood heart-throb Leonardo DiCaprio

FRANCE'S WORLD CUP VICTORY

Responses to France's 3-0 win over Brazil in the Final

CHRISTIAN
SCIENCE
MONITOR
United States

While the triumph may force the French to admit that Pont l'Evêque cheese is now only their second-greatest source of pride, one would guess that even French farmers won't mind. It's not often that the world is willing to join in a rousing chorus of *Vive la France!*

LE MONDE
France

What the French team surely couldn't have expected, nor even dreamed of, was that they would provoke such national bonding, that they would awaken a whole country, that they could give so much joy to so



many people. Perhaps it was that we saw in them the representatives and the hope of the next generation - which is in itself just as important as winning the cup.

THE HINDU
India

For a society facing an assortment of socio-economic prob-

lems, sectarian strife and violence, France '98 came as a balm, successfully pushing into the background the crippling strikes in the transport sector, and the fear of attacks from some groups of Muslim fundamentalists. France is basking in an unprecedented wave of joy.

THE NEW
STATESMAN
UK

There are moments in the history of any country when what takes place on the field of play is indicative of where the nation is headed. It may well be that Zinedine Zidane has released the French from the grip of Le Pen and brought to the Champs Elysees a new spirit and, more importantly, a new alignment of social forces.

Yes, one million Frenchmen can be wrong

I AM pleased for the French. It could not have happened in a nicer people. Not quite true; it could have happened to a nicer people but it could not have happened to a more deserving people. Actually, that is not true either. It could have happened to us and we are a far more deserving people. But it never was going to happen to us. We do not have their luck. The luck of the French.

I suppose I am not really pleased for the French at all; but the spectacle of a million of them pouring festively down the Champs Elysees, singing "Je ne regrette rien," last Sunday night - and a million Frenchmen cannot be wrong - has reminded me of how I nearly was a Frenchman once.

It is a funny phrase: "A million Frenchmen cannot be wrong."

considering that if you had to come up with a number of persons who are, *ipso facto*, bound to be wrong on all occasions and in all matters, your first choice would have to be a million Frenchmen.

Sour grapes, I know. Put it down to the fact that when it comes to France, I nurse a grievance. Had things fallen out differently, that could have been me bouncing up and down on the bonnet of a Citroën in a champagne delirium, chanting an Algerian's name.

How old was I when chance came my way on a sheet of graph paper, folded four ways inside one of those lined continental envelopes, the like of which I had never before seen? Thirteen? Chance is always female, and mine was called Adele. My new pen friend. From Aix-les-Bains. Anglo-

French pen friendship was all the rage in the Fifties. It was meant to help us like each other better. Not enough, it seems, that we had liberated them a decade before.

"Les amis de plume," I seem to remember our French master calling them. But I may have made that up. What I haven't made up is that he gave a French name to everything, including the gym slipper he beat us with whenever we forgot its French name. Pierre. "Eh bien, bend over, Jacobson. Pierre wants a word in your ear. What does he want?"

"Un mot, monsieur."

"And where does he want it?"

"Dans mon oreille, monsieur."

Cute euphemism, don't you think "oreille"? But then there would have been trouble with the parents, had he started teaching us



HOWARD JACOBSON

the French for arse. Euphemisms were his bag. *Son sac*. Euphemisms and nicknames. Mine was *La Lune* - the moon. Something to do with the long face I pulled whenever Pierre wanted a word in my ear.

Anyway, I have him to thank for Adele. Even if, at 13, I wasn't ready for her. It was the photo that sent me off the rails. Until the photo, everything was fine. Every fortnight, she would write and tell me about Aix, the sulphur springs, the swimming, the mountain flowers, the pellucid rivulets (I reckon she had looked up "pellucid rivulets") and every fortnight I would write back about the Pennines, the rain, the skylessness, the polluted rills (I had looked up "polluted rills").

I cannot say my heart was in it. I never took seriously her suggestion that I come to Aix and bathe with her, for example. I had seen photos of my friends' pen pals and you would not have wanted to share a rivulet with any of them, however beneficent the waters might have been.

Then her photo. I no longer have it, but I can see her still. My Adele. Eyes the colour of Savoy gentians, hair like alpine corn. But it was the breasts that landed me in trouble. The breasts and the tuffy armpits. And the undulant abdomen. And the voluptuous V of the scarecrist loins. And the crème Chantilly thighs. How was I to describe them?

Did I have to describe them? Did I have to describe them to her, since they were hers and she, of all people, must have known all about them already? Fair questions to ask. But then, did she really have to show them to me in the first place? Was it absolutely necessary that she send me a snap of her wearing so little, and that little being so tight, *ma pèche, mon pèche, mon plat du jour*?

My reasoning went like this. We were pen pals in order to help each other with the subtleties of our respective languages and the refinements of our respective cultures. When I wrote and told her that her breasts reminded me of twin domes, that her belly was a bosky thicket, that her thighs were two fair marble pillars which did the temple of the Gods support, and that she was cleft (oh God!) like ripe drop cherries, what was I doing but acquainting her with the best of our English authors?

I never heard from her again. Not a word. Gone forever, *non vie en rose*, my chance to bathe my life away in Aix. And you ask me if I regret nothing....

Fat chance. You see, you have to be French to be as philosophical as that.

Father figure with the common touch

SATURDAY PROFILE GEORGE CAREY

THE LUMBERJACK shirt, it has to be admitted, did not exactly help. The Rt Rev George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of All England, this week "welcomed" *HELLO!* magazine into his home in "historic Lambeth Palace" and was pictured holding hands with his wife Eileen and "relaxing" in their private family apartment.

In the accompanying interview, he described himself as a "dreamy, meditative kind of chap" who would like to be remembered as someone, "to misquote Frank Sinatra," who "did it God's way".

He didn't believe in reincarnation, he said, but was open-minded about the existence of angels - especially since he reckoned he was married to one. The exclamation mark at the end of the magazine's title is there for good reason, it seems.

It was all grist to the mill of the Carey-knockers in the spiritual smart set as they prepared for the 13th Lambeth Conference which begins in Canterbury today. It brings together 798 Anglican bishops from across the globe for their once-a-decade gathering to discuss the future of the world's second largest community of faith.

"George has come a long way from nowhere," said one, pointedly. "This is exactly the kind of thing that leaves him so open to ridicule," said another. "Runcie would have got away with it because of his self-deprecating sense of self-mockery; but irony is not George's strong point," said a third.

There is, for all our talk of equal opportunity, still something tremendously class-conscious about British society. The "Bow-born and Dagenham-bred" archbishop - with his bluff, rather hustering way of speaking, his evangelical directness, and his early proneness to gaffes - is an easy target for snobbery.

"He's too concerned with impressions and too obsequious to royalty," said one spiritual sophisticate. "There's something slightly pompous and posturing about his

style," said another. "Basil's not cleverer than George," said a third, who was clearly also on first name terms with Cardinal Hume, "but he manages to put himself over as a spiritual guide for the modern world; it's not gravitas, it's something to do with charisma".

Already the traditional Lambeth Conference corridor activity - of jockeying to position your favourite for the Cantuar succession - has begun. (The urbane Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, is most favoured - but only if he does some nifty footwork and begins to ordain women priests, something which the other main candidate, the Archbishop of York, is steadfast against. If they fall, Rowan Williams, the clever but holy Bishop of Monmouth, who chairs one of the key Lambeth sessions, is a strong candidate.)

But the fact is that Dr Carey can choose not to retire until he is 70 in eight years' time, and the signs are that he may hang on. For George Carey has another side to the one so easily parodied. Behind the scenes, he is a more complex character. Often caricatured as an evangelical, he is much influenced by Catholic spirituality and ecclesiology; there are more eucharists per week at Lambeth now than under his predecessor, Robert Runcie.

George Carey is a plain man, but not illiberal. Though he takes a traditional line on homosexuality - the flashpoint for Lambeth in the weeks ahead - he is, when dealing with individuals, a man of pastoral breadth and more liberal than supposed.

He has, in recent times, displayed increasing sureness. He speaks out less often, but what he says is much stronger. At Diana's funeral, he presided with quiet authority and his *Thought for the Day* on radio that morning was beautifully judged.

His speeches and sermons over

the past two years - rarely reported - offer consistent, carefully prepared statements on secularism, morality, education, unemployment, marriage and international debt. If not scintillating, they are serious-minded and sound.

There are fewer gaffes, too. Indeed, his most recent blunder, as reported in the press, has been subject to a different analysis in the run-up to Lambeth. He annoyed Rome with remarks he made in Luxembourg's Catholic cathedral in April when he reminded the Pope that the Eucharist does not belong to one denomination: "We do not own it, rather, it is a *gracius* gift from God." And he asked the Vatican, in fairly mild language, to be more generous in interpreting the provisions of its own canon law.

The Pope went huffy and it was seen as a gaffe. But Carey knows his Catholic theology (he studied in Rome) and it is perhaps no coincidence that senior Third World figures in the Anglican Communion think it was deliberate. "He took a hard line because he was getting nowhere with the present Pope," one told me. "He is preparing for the post-John Paul II agenda."

Subsequent developments, in which the ailing Pope has tried to nail down doctrinal orthodoxy while he is still around, have only confirmed that view.

The Vatican's dogma watchdog, Cardinal Ratzinger, recently said Pope Leo XIII's 1896 declaration of Anglican ordinations as "absolutely null and utterly void" still holds as "definitive" truth. And the Pope's letter, *Ad Tuendam Fidem* (For the Defence of the Faith), has threatened to excommunicate Catholics who stray from the Vatican line.

Carey has prepared carefully for Lambeth. At the last conference in 1988 there was a threat to the

continuing unity of the communion on the issue of women priests. This time the faultline between liberals and conservatives is over whether practising homosexuals should be ordained.

The temperature is heated. A year ago, 80 Third World bishops produced the Kuala Lumpur statement stating that "setting aside of biblical teaching in such actions as the ordination of practising homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions calls into question the authority of the Holy Scriptures. This is totally unacceptable to us."

Their stance was endorsed by 44 more conservative bishops meeting in Dallas - and later, Archbishop Moses Tay of Singapore threatened to move to "expel those provinces" who did not agree.

The liberal bishops of the United States counter-blasted with the ultra-progressive Bishop John Spong of Newark branding the conservatives as uninformed, superstitious and backward folk whose literal interpretation of the Bible "has become one of embarrassment to the cause of Christ."

And he accused the Archbishop of Canterbury of having "no moral credibility" and "disappointing those who expect more of his leadership role."

Carey responded by censuring Spong for his "bectoring and intemperate tone". But he did more. He continued his programme of visiting Anglican Communion countries - now up to 64 - to engage in quiet bridge-building.

If his lack of a patrician manner has lost him points at home, it does the opposite abroad. "He's very good at understanding the commonwealth culture and has an ability to relate to people in less sophisticated cultures," said one Lambeth insider.

That view was echoed by one prominent Third World Christian who told me: "His manner is not aristocratic, colonial, or military. He's been genuinely trying to listen



George Carey's political nous has surprised many among his fractious flock

Herbie Knott

to the people of the South and wants to build our capacity to do things ourselves rather than having everything done by the West. He's a father figure, and he has created lots of space for everyone."

It may be that Carey's political ability has been under-estimated, for he has not just tried to spot the unexploded bombs in advance, he has also cleverly prepared the ground for a Lambeth Commission on Sexuality. That could buy time until the

communion is ready for compromise - and allow the conference to get on with its other business on mission, youth, euthanasia, ecumenism, relations with Islam, and the immorality of international debt.

The perennial Anglican Question is always about where its authority actually lies. Domestically, Carey is in the process of trying, through reforms which come into force in the autumn, to create an Archbishops' Council which will

impose some strategic direction upon the unruly Synod which allegedly governs the church.

Whether they work remains to be seen. But on the international scene, there can be no such equivalent. Archbishops of Canterbury must manage the Anglican Communion through diplomacy and force of personality. The next three weeks will prove to be the most public of tests for the Carey style.

PAUL VALLEY

A genius trampled by Hollywood's populism

SATURDAY ESSAY by DAVID THOMSON

IT WAS in 1958 or 1959 that a small, diligent army joined the National Film Theatre because it announced a season that would show all the available work of Ingmar Bergman. That extraordinary man was 40 then, and he had lately captivated art-house moviegoers all over the world with two sombre, yet lyrical films, both in engraved black and white, that seemed to show modern men and women still engaged in their eternal dance with life and death tall at the height of atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons). Those films were *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*.

The season that unwound to packed, rapt houses beneath Waterloo Bridge, allowed us a chance to see (or re-see) *Smiles of a Summer Night*, *Sawdust and Tinsel*, *Summer with Monika*, *Summer Intimacy* - remember those burnished summers, with the sun kissing the water, the leaves and the pouty body of Harriet Anderson?

People said Bergman was a master already; they noted how in casting Victor Sjöström in *Wild Strawberries*, he had extended the rich, humanist tradition of all Swedish cinema. They remarked on his great actors, and actresses. For Ingmar Bergman might be

famously depressed, ascetic, withdrawn and shy - but did he have an eye for women. He was a great artist, and a great movie director, and in 1958, of course, just about all the famous directors were alive still, and working: Hawks and Hitchcock; Lean and Powell; Chaplin and Keaton; Renoir and Cocteau, and Fritz Lang and Luis Buñuel. In only a few years' time, they would be joined by more - Godard and Truffaut; Fellini and Antonioni; Satyajit Ray and Akira Kurosawa.

Times pass. But a few days ago, on 14 July 1998, Ingmar Bergman was 80. He does not really function as a director any more: he is most reluctant to leave Sweden, and I daresay he has times still when his shyness and melancholy are unbearable. However, if he had done nothing before 1958, the years since have built another string of films to get him into heaven (or its darker alternative) - *Through a Glass Darkly*, *Winter Light*, *The Silence*, *Persona*, *Shame*, *Cries and Whispers*, *Fanny and Alexander*, *After the Rehearsal*.

You will gather from such titles that Ingmar Bergman has not yet taken on epic spectacle, the great monsters of our dreams, special effects, or the championship of James Cameron. Rather, he has

worked in the absolute certainty that there never has been, nor ever will be, an effect on the screen more special than a fine face, in close-up, encountering an experience or an idea - a moment merely - that alters life for ever. So there is surely a world in which Mr Cameron remains king, and it may seem extensive and satisfying to him. But that is only because he still lacks the wit, the daring, the maturity, or the inescapable need to enter the dreamscape of Ingmar Bergman and those small, economical films of his in which so much of life is contained, and pondered over. Mr Cameron may be the king of the world because of *Titanic*, but Ingmar Bergman is the possibility of life in the water, or sunlight on the changing surface of the sea.

That mix of chill and warmth was not always evident. For years, in Sweden and beyond, Bergman was regarded as an intimidating pessimist and a very difficult young man. In fact, as early as 1946, he was nearly caught up in a strange and little known farry from Hollywood. The producer, David O. Selznick, was determined to make a picture of *A Doll's House* in Scandinavia, with



Sombre yet lyrical: 'Wild Strawberries'

Kobal

Dorothy McGuire and Robert Mitchum as the leads! He actually hired Bergman to do the script (and prevailed upon him to give it a happy ending!). Selznick's European agent reported that Bergman was "a queer looking individual: very young, terribly thin and tall, with hair down to his shoulders, and huge eyes deep in his head."

That film was never made, and Bergman never went to Hollywood. Still, in the mid-1970s - by which time, he was celebrated all over the world and had cut his hair - he had

another near miss. He was charged with income-tax fraud in Sweden; he had a breakdown (he had many). Left Sweden, came close to doing an American picture, and actually made a film, *The Serpent's Egg*, in Germany. He has nursed unhappiness: his 1993 novel, *The Best Intentions*, rather harps on the dismay and pain of his childhood; he has had several marriages and several more affairs, and plenty of his titles cry out with the anguish of being alive. At the same time, Bergman has been a

survivor and a shrewd comic observer, as well as someone moved by ordinary souls: *Waiting Women*, *Smiles of a Summer Night* and *Fanny and Alexander* can be very funny.

His greatest subjects have remained guilt and doubt, along with the chance that love or work can deflect people from their pain. He has been a religious man - yet without a god. He is a family man, who recoils from the suffocating ties of that institution. He steadily, albeit neurotically, explores the paradoxes of liberty and servitude: he has never lost his thrill at people engaged in self-examination. And there is a handful of films - *Persona*, *Cries and Whispers*, *Fanny and Alexander*, *Sawdust and Tinsel*, *Wild Strawberries* (or pick your own five) - that are immortal.

As I said, times change. In the years immediately after Bergman's international success, there was a reaction. That's when people smiled warily at the "Nordic gloom"; that's when the sheer perfection of his work became a little oppressive. It was also the moment when the English-speaking film critics discovered, or reclaimed, the virtues of the "entertainment" movie. In that mood, some felt

that Bergman was elitist, too solemn and too humourless in his anguish.

That passed, swept aside by the sequence of films and the clear development in the artist's mind. It is not very relevant to call *Persona* or *Cries and Whispers* "too solemn" - it is like complaining that Mahler will break your heart. By now, the tradition of the entertainment movie is more questionable, or suspect. There was a time, from the 1920s, say, through to the early 1970s, when it seemed vital and lively and when its best exponents were fit to be put beside Renoir, Ozu, Dreyer, Buñuel, and so on.

But the kingdom of James Cameron now is less enviable or remarkable, less honest or lively. Indeed, we're bound to wonder whether the modern Hollywood would have time or space for Hawks, Lubitsch, Preston Sturges, Max Ophüls, von Sternberg, and so on. Today, there is nothing like the confidence there was in 1958 that we live in a time of great film-makers. There is Bergman (retired), there is Robert Bresson (not likely to work again, there is Antonioni (in poor health). Will Kurosawa direct again? There is plenty of talent in America, but is there one director there unmistakably possessed by greatness? Is the culture of

film-making capable of replacing all those who have died? Or do we face a range of careers - like Scorsese, say - where early promise has made middle age especially disappointing?

Ingmar Bergman never lost his trust in Sweden, where only "small" films could be made. But he trusted that their size would materialise in the minds of viewers. He worked out of habit, love and vocation; he shunned the fame and opportunities that came with success. One suspects that he was never touched by the fame, or persuaded that he had dealt with all his own questions. He stands less as a film-maker now than as one of those 20th century figures who deal in the imagination: like Bacon and Freud, Calvino and Kafka; Mahler and Stephen Sondheim. It just happened that he was a film-maker, largely oblivious of this century's daft cult about film-making.

If ever a time returns when people make films as privately as they might paint or write poetry, then the example of Bergman will stand clear. And if film perishes, or is consumed in so many other frantic cults, then Bergman's films may seem like one of those vestiges of other times - like the Sistine Chapel, the miracle plays, or the frenzy of Charlie Parker's 78s.

Professor Herbert Nicholas

BOTH AS a teacher and as a writer, Herbert Nicholas's academic interests were focused on politics and institutions in Britain and in America. This made him seem increasingly old-fashioned in an academic world of proliferating disciplines and sub-disciplines, but these interests were rooted in the deeply felt experiences of wartime and a personal conviction that it was principally through the proper working of such institutions and of the political process that future catastrophe could be avoided.

The politics and institutions of the United States and her relations with Britain remained for him a subject worth studying because he saw America in the days of Roosevelt as a positive and vital force for good; but he recognised and accepted, with some sadness, that a younger generation took a rather different view after Vietnam and Watergate.

He was born in 1911 in the small South Wales mining village of Treharris, the youngest of the seven children of the Rev William Nicholas, a Baptist minister. From his father, he inherited a sharp, quick-witted sense of humour and an interest in politics. Like his father, he was a lifelong Liberal, admitting to a preference for the Gladstonian version his father had admired.

As the baby of the family, he was a little spoiled, all the more so after an attack of rheumatic fever which kept him home from school. Until the age of 11 he was taught at home by his two eldest sisters, Eveline and Doris, his world happily centred on the Park in Treharris, surrounded by the numerous members of his mother's family.

He was then sent to school in Cardiff from where he won a scholarship to Mill Hill School. In 1930 he was awarded both a place at New College and an exhibition at St Edmund Hall to read for a degree in Classics. He chose to go to New College.

New College was to him a revelation and a liberation and he loved every minute of his time there. Partly because of his exuberant enjoyment of Oxford, partly because he had no great talent for writing Greek and Latin prose, much less verse, he obtained only a third class in Classical Mods, the first part of the course. But when he started to work for Greats, he found his niche.

New College in the early Thirties had talented and inspiring classical tutors. He was taught philosophy by Isaiah Berlin (who was only two years older than himself, and ancient history by Christopher Cox, both of whom remained lifelong friends. These experiences were central to the formation both of the historian and the sociable man: throughout his life Nicholas combined learning and teaching with the cultivation of warm friendships. In 1934 he was awarded a First in Greats. He spent the following year

The politics and institutions of the United States remained for him a subject worth studying because he saw America in the days of Roosevelt as a positive and vital force for good



at New College as a senior scholar studying history.

In 1935 he set off for the United States as a Commonwealth scholar with the intention of becoming a historian of the 17th century at Yale University. But New Deal America proved more engaging and was to become one of his particular interests. For many years he taught a special subject in the Oxford history school on the subject.

On his return to England in 1937 there were few academic posts for an increasingly reluctant 17th-century expert who was becoming ever more aware of impending war and the importance of America when this happened. For a year he survived without a job until finally he was elected to a lectureship in politics at Exeter College.

He was there throughout the war becoming a full Fellow in 1944, but from 1941 until war ended he was based in London during the week working at the American desk of the Ministry of Information with the journalist Robin Cruickshank. This too was a formative experience. Out of it arose Nicholas's *Washington Despatches* 1941-45 (1981), letters from Isaiah Berlin in Washington to London during the war.

In 1951 he returned to New College, remaining a Fellow for the rest of his life. Initially, he taught Politics. In 1956 he became Reader in the Comparative Study of Institutions and in 1968 was the first holder of the Rhodes Trust Chair in American History and Institutions. During this time he published a stream of books and papers, written in elegant, witty, arresting prose on Anglo-American relations and a variety of other primarily American subjects.

In 1988 he made the last of many visits to America to cover the presidential election, an event he had never missed since the war. It was in the field of election studies that he made his one major and important contribution to English political studies when, in 1951, he published *The British General Election of 1950* in the Nuffield series.

Nicholas had always been loyal and loving to the people and the institutions which had nurtured him. The 10 years after his retirement in 1978 were largely spent in caring for his two sisters. When Eveline died in 1987 he devoted his energies to running the newly set up development office at New College, a task he performed with flair and charm.

But in 1991, weeks before his 80th birthday, he suffered a stroke which impaired his memory. Thereafter he lived quietly, moving to be near his family, of which he became a much-loved member.

Herbert Nicholas was a man well liked and respected within the university and loved by his many friends on both sides of the Atlantic. With all his achievements he remained modest and unassuming, willing to help even a 14-year-old schoolboy to understand the basics of his subject. He had the directness and honesty of a child without being in the least naive. His judgements of people and events were shrewd, profound and reliable. But above all, he was fun. He had an exuberant love of wordplay and an irrepressible boyish sparkle, an infectious tenor chuckle, and an appetite for life and new experiences even when old age and ill-health had marked him.

Jacqueline Beaumont Hughes

Herbert George Nicholas, American historian; born Treharris, Glamorgan 8 June 1911; Commonwealth Fund Fellow in Modern History, Yale University 1935-37; Lecturer, Exeter College, Oxford 1938; Fellow 1946-51; American Division, Ministry of Information and HM Embassy, Washington 1941-46; Faculty Fellow, Nuffield College, Oxford 1948-57; Nuffield Reader in the Comparative Study of Institutions, Oxford University 1956-69; Rhodes Professor of American History and Institutions 1969-78 (Emeritus); FBA 1969; Fellow, New College, Oxford 1951-78; Emeritus Fellow 1978-80; Honorary Fellow 1980-98; Director, New College Development Fund 1989-94; died Oxford 3 July 1998.



Phebeby shows Martin Clinch of Blackheath, London, how to hold a bat, 1951

Hulton Getty

Arthur Phebeby

ARTHUR PHEBEY was one of that small band of professional sportsmen, more prevalent 50 years ago, who were sufficiently adept at more than one sport to be offered separate engagements. The fact that Phebeby chose to play cricket for Kent, rather than football for a League club, is another indication of how much the world has changed.

Phebeby was a handsome man and an attractive right-hand batsman who played 320 matches for the county in the period 1946-61. An at-

tacking player, he was good enough technically to be promoted in the order and formed, with Arthur Fagg, a profitable and stable opening partnership.

He passed 1,000 runs in a season nine times, his best year being 1959 when he reached 1,500 runs at an average of 33. He fielded mostly at gully (205 catches), hit 12 centuries and went on to serve the Kent committee for a further eight years until 1991, becoming chairman of the cricket sub-committee.

Phebeby was a schoolboy inter-

national at both football and cricket and played inside right for Dulwich Hamlet and Heaton. He might have joined Charlton Athletic or Arsenal. During the Second World War he served as a fighter pilot in the Fleet Air Arm and later became director of a construction magazine.

Derek Hodgson

Arthur Henry Phebeby, cricketer; born Catford, Middlesex 1 October 1924; twice married (one son, one daughter); died 3 July 1998.

Mary Cairncross

I remember (as the young son-in-law) trying to warm some plates in the oven, only to find it occupied by a large microscope, gently baking

MARY CAIRNCROSS was one of that generation of English women who made their life principally in bringing up a large family and looking after a busy and successful husband - in her case the economist Sir Alec Cairncross. But by her warmth, her vigour and also her mild eccentricities, she touched the lives of many more people than she might have done had she chosen a conventional career.

She was born Mary Glynn in 1919, to a military and professional family. Her father was an army officer who served in the Boer War and India; her brother, who died while still in his twenties, was a doctor. Other family members were engineers: the north pier at Tynemouth and the docks in Bombay bear their names. It was a little unusual - but only a little for someone from this sort of solid professional family - that she should herself go to university, to Bedford College, London, where she read Sociology.

For Mary Cairncross (she married in 1943) the family history of service to country took the form of running homes in London, Paris, Washington, Glasgow and Oxford - where Alec was variously Chief Economic Adviser at the Treasury, an international civil servant at the OEEC and the World Bank, Professor of Economics and head of house - and bringing up five children. She was briefly a bousing manager on leaving university, but the main real "job", at which she excelled, was

when, in 1969, Alec became Master of St Peter's at Oxford. As Master's wife, she became guide, confidante, helper and friend to the generations of students who went through the college.

She and Alec realised that there had to be something better than the normal stuffy "sherry with the Master" style of entertaining. So they invented the Sunday breakfast, more a brunch, at which undergraduates, their girlfriends, other young people and anyone else who was staying in the college would mingle. Shy undergraduates would find themselves being introduced to Buckminster Fuller or Lawrence Harvey. The family of a deposed African president would be welcomed alongside the eminent Angli-

can bishop. The shy would help ferry food from the kitchen. Everyone was family: everyone was included.

And so, a generation later, there are hundreds, maybe thousands of ex-students all around the world who remember that time as something special: the moment they developed confidence in themselves, the moment they saw there were solutions to seemingly impossible personal problems, the moment they grew up.

For them, as for the great circle of other friends, it was the combination of warmth and eccentricity which charmed and comforted. The warmth was self-evident, but maybe the eccentricity was even more memorable.

Life was a search for the ingenious solution to the practical problem. I suspect that came from her father, who as a young cavalry officer in the field in the Boer War caused something of a stir in the mess by always having fresh milk instead of tinned with his coffee. How had he managed to obtain such a luxury, a somewhat miffed superior officer enquired? He explained that it was very simple: he milked his mare.

So it was wholly in character that as a teenager Mary should shoot a pigeon from her bedroom window with an airgun when she should have been revising for her exams. (Her father was so impressed by her marksmanship that she was immediately forgiven.) She

claimed that she married Alec because he was the one boyfriend who would willingly ride on the back of her BSA motorbike. She rock-climbed in the Peak District: she fly-fished: she drove a road roller on her honeymoon.

In later years she bound books, she made kites, she spun wool from a Jacob's sheep on a hand spindle. She watched birds, she learned Japanese. Her hand-drawn Christmas cards went to embassies, universities, and presidential palaces around the world.

But most people's abiding memory will be Mary's determined hunt for that elegant solution. I remember (as the young son-in-law) trying to warm some plates in the oven, only to find it occupied by a large brass microscope, gently baking.

Why was it there? Well, Mary wanted to examine some cheese mites which had arrived on a smelly cheese from France (to see if they were different from English mites) and the lenses of the family microscope had suffered from condensation. Most people would have given up and used a magnifying glass or maybe taken the microscope to bits and cleaned the lenses. Mary popped it in the oven.

Hamish McRae

Mary Frances Glynn; born Ripon, Yorkshire 12 January 1919; married 1943 Alec Cairncross (KCMG 1967; three sons, two daughters); died Oxford 26 June 1998.



Cairncross with fishing rod at Arncliffe, North Yorkshire, in 1945

Udi Eichler

UDI EICHLER was a rare spirit in the world of television; a thinker who cared.

A documentary television producer, he was not particularly interested in styles of film-making. For him, content was the thing; his programmes addressed awkward areas of human experience others shied away from. His, and his colleagues', working method was rigorously honest. None of that band ever set up an encounter, faked a scene, or for that matter shirked an issue. I once explained to a mildly aggrieved government minister that not a syllable of the interview he had given us would be used because nothing he had said was of substance. He took it like a lamb - well, almost.

Born in Austria in 1942, during bloody Central European turmoil, Eichler came to England after the Second World War as a teenager and, to our benefit, made a new life for himself here, securing an education, marriage, and a general traineeship at the BBC. There his clear mind and directness of speech found expression, in an organisation dedicated to reaching out to an audience.

Eichler was one of the youngest of a talented group of current affairs programme-makers who worked together at Lime Grove in the Sixties; precociously, with no hanging back, he boldly argued his corner. With Philip Whitehead and David Elstein, before the decade was over he left the BBC for ITV, sensing at Thames a moment of opportunity when, as BBC current affairs shifted a notch or two towards populism and the ratings, ITV chose to aim up and in news, current affairs and documentary (drama peaks were still ahead), emulate and even better the BBC's achievement.

Eichler confronted hard truths directly in his personal life. For years he lived in an extraordinary community in Kew, where men and women shared parenting, and discussed their problems and feelings in get-togethers on Sunday evenings. Eichler made a film about it, *Family Therapy*, which was broadcast in 1995 as part of the *States of Mind* series.

His lifelong interest in therapy later led him to become a therapist himself. An early indication of this came when a friend reported sitting in his office for ages while he jumbled away on the telephone in German. "Won't be long," he interrupted himself. "Just talking to my analyst." Ah, the days of the unmonitored phone call.

In the Thames documentary department, Eichler pursued his intellectual interests, sharing space with kindred and maverick spirits: Ken Ashton, capturing with the camera East End crime; Richard Broad, filming Third World poverty and working-class history; Frank Civanovich retracing the road to Wigan Pier, or sketching vignettes - of sport, or war or village life.

Eichler was not a documentarist to match any of these. He was a goodish film-maker. His forte, and what he will be remembered for was the studio, and the world of ideas.

For Thames, in the early Seventies he produced *Something to Say*. The interlocutor Bryan Magee chaired a discussion between two participants only, philosophers perhaps or Nobel prize-winners. Over the hour, each put a case before argument was joined. Eichler aimed to generate light, not heat. *Something to Say* went out at 11pm. Someone once claimed to have seen drinkers leaving a pub in time to get home to watch it.

Voices, his first series for the new Channel 4, which began in 1987, pulled the same trick. Eichler produced 42 of those lively, fearlessly lofty discussions, those appearing in them a roll-call of the thinking world. One early edition, on the artist under totalitarianism, featured George Steiner, Mary McCarthy and Joseph Brodsky, with Al Alvarez in the chair. Latterly Michael Ignatieff presided, his first television appearance.

Why should viewers out see and hear their intellectual idols? The ratings were tiny as ratings go, but more heard Voices than read literary magazines. Week after week, unfailingly cheerful, Eichler, without condescension, served up to the general public caviar of the mind. We enjoyed the treat.

When fatal illness struck, Eichler, lovingly supported by his second wife Judith Summers, called on all his courage. He popped a smiling face round doors, bicycled from one friend to another, took his children sick-ing, saw his patients, cheered us all up. To the end, he shone.

Udi Eichler has died just as Channel 4 is pondering whether to re-light the fire of highbrow television. It would be a deserved tribute were his example to spark it off.

Jeremy Isaacs

Gerald Rainard (Udi Eichler), television producer and director and psychotherapist; born Graz, Austria 12 January 1942; married 1962 Diana Davies (two daughters: marriage dissolved), 1997 Judith Summers (one son); died London 3 June 1998.

Udi Eichler

Donald King

DONALD KING was a medieval scholar of rare distinction but also a brilliant curator with a firm view of what that profession meant. He spent 32 years in the Department of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the last eight of them as Keeper.

He was born in Hanwell, Middlesex, in 1920, educated at Ealing County School for Boys, and joined the Ministry of Education as a young man. War had started and he was then called up, serving in a variety of Intelligence posts ending with the Monuments and Fine Arts Branch of the Control Commission for Germany - proving to be a superb linguist with a particularly good knowledge of French and German - and gaining a foundation knowledge of the care of works of art.

Post-war, on a grant given to ex-servicemen, he went to the Courtauld Institute of Art, gaining a First in the History of Art. Late in 1948 he entered an open competition for an assistant keepership at the V & A, joining the Textiles Department. In due course he was promoted to Deputy Keeper and finally to Keeper in 1972, a post he held until his retirement - civil servants leave at 60 whatever their talents.

In his early years at the museum he helped the then Keeper, George Wingfield Digby, to re-establish the department, re-open the Study Room, and register many acquisitions. Six years of war left a great backlog of routine work which King demolished with the speed and efficiency he showed throughout his career. His visual perception and retentive photographic memory were of enormous help to his colleagues. He could quote a useful page reference several years after reading a book or article once.

He appreciated the need to understand the structure of historic textiles, for these hardly ever bear signatures and have patterns related to a wide variety of other works of art. Only after the Second World War were curators taught the analysis of ancient textiles; King attended the first two international courses for textile historians, held in 1956 and 1957 under the direction of Félix Guichard at the Musée des Tissus in Lyons, the centre of French weaving since the 18th century.

On his second course, he was accompanied by his new wife, Monique Toury, formerly of the Cluny museum in Paris. She remained his constant companion and support, the epitome of the biblical virtuous woman.

His achievements were many, one of the most memorable being the exhibition of English medieval embroidered textiles, *'Opus Anglicanum'*, held in

1963 - preceded by the birth of his son two days before the opening. The assembled vestments could represent an important conference of the medieval church. It was a measure of the respect which King commanded that leaders such as the Vatican, the cathedrals of Sens, Canterbury, Comminges, Pienza and Salisbury, as well as other ecclesiastical institutions, were willing to lend such rare and fragile material. Private owners and the City livery companies also contributed and it was a splendid show. It demonstrated his quiet efficiency, no wasted time or resources.

Donald King was a man of wide-ranging scholarship, a superb lecturer able to convey his own love and appreciation of the arts to diverse audiences. Renaissance embroideries, tapestries, medieval silks, Oriental carpets, fakes, he wrote cogently about them all. His texts were elegant and stylish, with no unnecessary facts. (Who but he could write an important two-page minute in beautiful handwriting without needing to cross out one comma?)

In his reign at the V & A, the museum acquired at his prompting some beautiful and important pieces such as a Venetian embroidered altar frontal, designed in the workshop of Paolo Veneziano; the tapestry *The Life of Man*, later found to have been designed by Giorgio Vasari; and a large collection of late Antique textiles acquired from University College London. A 1989 issue of the periodical *Textile History* devoted to him publishes a complete list of them. He tracked down and re-attributed a number to the great and enduring benefit of the taxpayer. Several are on exhibition but, while they bear museum numbers and attributions, his part is never revealed on the label.

King never forgot a national museum's real audience but never con-



The Erpingham Chasuble, embroidered in England between 1400 and 1415; acquired by King for the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1967

The assembled vestments of his exhibition 'Opus Anglicanum' could represent an important conference of the medieval church

HISTORICAL NOTES

TONY COLLINS

Two very different nations at play

WHY ARE there two types of rugby? As the England rugby union side limped back from the southern hemisphere recently, the casual observer might well ask why rugby is a divided sport. The answer is simple - class.

Following the founding of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) in 1871, rugby rapidly became the most popular working-class sport in northern England. Until 1888, soccer was a poor second. But the game's leaders did not welcome the huge influx and success of working-class players. To play rugby, most working-class players had to take time off work and, not surprisingly, expected to be compensated for doing so. In 1888, attempting to stem the influence of the newcomers, the RFU introduced its first amateur regulations. A series of trials and investigations was launched to root out the evil of the "velvet professional".

Fear and loathing stalked the clubhouses of rugby union. "The Rugby game, as its name implies, sprang from our public schools. Why should we hand it over without a struggle to the hordes of working men players who would quickly engulf all others?" asked the Yorkshire rugby player and cricketer Frank Mitchell. A Manchester supporter of the RFU argued: "If the working man cannot afford to play, he must do as other people have to do who want things they cannot afford - do without. Football is a luxury, not a necessity... the said working man, by the way, being too often a man whom a thoughtless crowd has spoiled for the dry drudgery of everyday life."

At the RFU's 1893 AGM, northern clubs proposed legalising "broken time" payments to players who took time off work to play. Arthur Budd, a former RFU president, laid out the stakes: "If the blind enthusiasts of working men's clubs insist on introducing professionalism, there can be but one result - disunion." After frantic campaigning on both sides, the amateur stalwarts won out and proceeded to prepare the ground for a split.

In the summer of 1895, the RFU formulated an even more draconian amateur code. The top northern clubs decided to cut their losses and, on 29 August 1895, met at the George Hotel in Huddersfield to form the Northern Union. Within a dozen years they had reduced the players on a side to 13, abolished the line-



Lawrence Dellaglio, English rugby union captain
David Rogers / Allsport

out and replaced the maul with an orderly play-the-ball. Running with the ball and the scoring of tries became paramount. Rugby league, as it became known in 1922, was now a different sport.

But the difference was not confined to the rulebook. English rugby union returned to its roots as the game of the public schools, the universities and the professions. Rugby league became deeply embedded in its northern working-class communities, becoming, as Richard Hoggart and others have noted, an important form of working-class self-expression. Isaac Bashevis Singer once commented that Yiddish was probably the only language that had never been spoken by men in power. One could make a similar observation of rugby league - wherever it is played in the world, its players and spectators are almost exclusively working-class men and women.

Despite union's abandonment of its amateur ideals, the chasm that divides rugby still exists. The 1996 Wigan versus Bath challenge matches demonstrated only how little the two games have in common. And anyone who goes to a Five Nations international at Twickenham and a Challenge Cup final at Wembley will find themselves visiting two utterly separate worlds.

It has become fashionable to deny the importance of class in British society. But even a cursory glance at the two rugby codes today will still reveal two very different nations at play.

Tony Collins is the author of *'Rugby's Great Split'* (Frank Cass, £16.50)

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

WHIBLEY: Yvonne, peacefully, after a long illness, in Cambridge, on Wednesday 15 July 1998, aged 81 years. Funeral service at Cambridge City Crematorium East Chapel on Thursday 23 July at 4pm. No flowers by request, but donations may be made to the Salvation Army, and sent c/o Harry Williams & Sons, 7 Victoria Park, Cambridge.

IN MEMORIAM

JOHNSON: Peter, on 19 July 1994. Love you always and forever. Warren.

LECTURES

TODAY National Gallery: James Beaud, "Snakes (III)". "Malignity of the Century": Poussin: *Landscape with a Man killed by a Snake*, 12 noon. Victoria and Albert Museum: Charlotte Cotton, "How the V&A collects photographs", 2pm.

TOMORROW National Portrait Gallery: Ann Kodicek, "The BP Portrait Award: trends and highlights", 3pm.

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Mr Kenneth Armitage, sculptor, 82; Lady Bingley Research Social Worker, City Corporation, 73; Mr Edward Bond, playwright and stage director, 64; Mr Richard Branson, founder and chairman, Virgin Group, 48; Mr James Brolin, actor, 58; Mr Dave Cash, disc jockey, 56; Lord Daresbury, chief executive, the Greenalls Group, 45; Mr Christopher Daykin, Government Actuary, 50; Mr George Doggart, cricket historian and former headmaster, 73; Sir William Doughty, deputy chairman, Britannia Refined Metals, 73; Viscount Esher, former Rector, Royal College of Art, 85; Mr Nick Faldo, golfer, 41; Mr John Fraser, former chairman and chief executive, Ciba-Geigy, 67; Senator John Glenn, former US astronaut, 77; Mr David Hemery, athlete, 54; Miss Elizabeth Jennings, writer, 72; Vice-Admiral Sir Louis Le Bailly, former Director-General of Intelligence, 83; Mr Dennis Lilley, cricketer, 49; Mr Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa, 80; Mr Anthony Miles, publisher, 68; Mr Richard Pasco, actor, 72; Sir Brooks Richards, former diplomat, 80; Sir Robert Speed QC, former Counsel to the Speaker, 93; Dr Martin Stephen, High Master, Manchester Grammar School, 49; Professor Hugh Stephenson, writer and journalist, 60; Sir

Jamie Stormonth Darling, former Director, National Royal Scottish Theatre, 46; Mr Ilie Nastase, tennis player, 52; Mr Adrian Noble, artistic director, Royal Shakespeare Company, 48; Sir Frederick O'Brien QC, former Sheriff Principal, Lothian and Borders, 81; Air Chief Marshal Sir David Parry-Evans, Chief Commander, St John Ambulance, 63; Mr Tom Raworth, poet, 69; Mr Ivor Roberts, actor, 73; Mr Dennis Stevenson, Chairman of the Trustees, Tate Gallery, 83; Sir Lawrence Verney, Recorder of London, 74; Professor Adrian Webb, Vice-Chancellor, Glamorgan University, 55; Mr Henry Wendt, former chairman, SmithKline Beecham, 65.

TOMORROW: Sir Robin Auld, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 61; Mr David Bowe, MBE, 43; Sir Norman Brain, former diplomat, 91; Sir Henry Brooke, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 62; Mr Cameron Cochrane, former Headmaster, Pettes College, 65; Sir Andrew Collins, High Court Judge, 56; Viscount Colville of Culross QC, circuit judge, 65; Professor Roy Duckworth, former Dean, London Hospital Medical School, 69; Baroness Elles, former Vice-President, European Parliament, 77; Mrs Linda Gilroy MP, 49; Miss Evelyn Glennie, percussionist, 33; Sir Anthony Graham, chairman, BMA Services, 68; Maj Gen Donald Isles, former Director General, Weapons, 74; Dr Carole Jordan, astronomer, 57; Sir Herbert Laming, former Chief Inspector, Social Services Inspectorate, 62; Dr Mary McGeown, nephrologist, 75; Mr Brian Lockhart, Headmaster, Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen, 54; Sir David Money-Coutts, former chairman, M & G Group, 67; Mr

Dominic Muldowney, composer and music director, Royal National Theatre, 46; Mr Ilie Nastase, tennis player, 52; Mr Adrian Noble, artistic director, Royal Shakespeare Company, 48; Sir Frederick O'Brien QC, former Sheriff Principal, Lothian and Borders, 81; Air Chief Marshal Sir David Parry-Evans, Chief Commander, St John Ambulance, 63; Mr Tom Raworth, poet, 69; Mr Ivor Roberts, actor, 73; Mr Dennis Stevenson, Chairman of the Trustees, Tate Gallery, 83; Sir Lawrence Verney, Recorder of London, 74; Professor Adrian Webb, Vice-Chancellor, Glamorgan University, 55; Mr Henry Wendt, former chairman, SmithKline Beecham, 65.

TODAY: Births: Robert Hooke, physicist, 1635; William Makepeace Thackeray, novelist and poet, 1811; Laurence Housman, playwright, novelist and illustrator, 1863. Deaths: Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch), poet and scholar, 1374; Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, painter, 1610; Peter III, Tsar of Russia, murdered 1762; Jane Austen, novelist, 1817. On this day: The Ballot Act was passed, after which the secret ballot became law. 1872: the first volume of Mein Kampf by Adolf Hitler was published, 1925. Today is

the Feast Day of St Arnoul or Arnulf of Metz, St Bruno of Segni, St Frederick of Utrecht and St Pambo.

TOMORROW: Births: Gottfried Keller, poet and novelist, 1819; Hilaire Germaine Edgar Degas, painter, 1834. Deaths: Dr John Caius (Keys), physician, founder of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, 1572; Thomas Cook, travel agent, 1892. On this day: The Mary Rose, flagship of King Henry VIII, sank in the Solent with the loss of 700 lives, 1545. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Ambrose, St Arsenius the Great, St James of Nisibis, St John Plesington, Saints Justa and Rufina, St Macrina the Younger, St Symmachus, Pope.

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the issue. This time it's about gays, last time, in 1988, it was about women priests.

In response to all this unrest, Dr Carey can do precisely nothing. "All we can do is, as leaders, pass resolutions which express the view of the Lambeth Conference." One feels that "view", in the singular, is a little over-optimistic here.

How much more satisfying it would be to tell everybody to just shut up and behave themselves. Picture the scene: Dr Carey stands up to give his opening address on Monday morning. "Do as you're told" he barks; and sits down again. Dr Carey would be superhuman if

ship. No longer. Pope John Paul II's letter, *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, issued two weeks ago, is causing a violent reaction among Anglicans. On one level, it was a legitimate reiteration of papal authority, calling Roman Catholics to line up behind the orthodox teaching of the faith. It attempts this, though, by prohibiting the discussion of matters not deemed to be part of the traditional teaching. If this weren't bad enough, a covering note from Cardinal Ratzinger names two of the disputed areas of most interest to Anglicans - women priests and the validity of the Anglican priesthood - and places them in the list of traditional truths, never to be discussed again. Anglicans involved in dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church said this week that they were "miffed". This must be recognised as ecumenical jargon, roughly translatable as "incandescent".

Besides which, Anglican leaders don't think the papal clamp-down will work. "To be a Christian is to be under authority," says Dr Carey; but he is pragmatic enough to realise that few people believe that any more - which rather scuppers any plans for greater legislative power. But this is exactly where Anglicanism scores, or shoots itself in the foot, depending on whether you most value freedom or control. The Church has a Catholic episcopal structure, but it deliberately undermines this with a Protestant belief in direct personal access to the Almighty, with the result that the lowest believer can, and often does, tell the earthly church hierarchy where to file their resolutions.

All that is left to Dr Carey, then, is moral authority. The trouble with moral authority is that it has to be earned, and you earn it by saying and doing the right thing, and the decision about whether what you have said or done the right thing is made by the people who are supposedly under your authority. This is not the way to run a railway, or anything, really: except, perhaps, a Christian Church.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages), which must be submitted in writing, are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Always include a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

TODAY: The Duke of York visits the 1998 Open Championship at the Royal Birkdale Golf Club, Southport, Merseyside. The Princess Royal, Patron, National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, opens their new bureau in Saltash, Cornwall; visits the South West Film Commission Offices.

Saltash: visits Saltash Ship Mobility; officially opens Spinnaker International's new factory at Saltash Parkway Industrial Estate; and, as Patron, Cornwall '98, meets participants in the Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Race, and attends a reception, Falmouth Docks, Cornwall.

TOMORROW: The Prince of Wales attends the Opening Service of the 13th Lambeth Conference in

Canterbury Cathedral, Kent. The Princess Royal visits the King George's Fund for Sailors' Tall Ships Exhibition of Marine Art at Falmouth Arts Centre, Royal Cornwall Polytechnic; and, as Patron, Cornwall '98, starts the Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Race at Falmouth, Cornwall.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household

Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am: 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, hand provided by the Welsh Guards.

TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

The diary of a young fashion design team struggling to present their collection at London Men's Fashion Week. By Andy Zneimer

Countdown to the catwalk

THE FIRST London Men's Fashion Week (LMFW) spanned just three days. Perhaps its short-lived but bright life is an indication of the task still at hand for the creatives behind the concept to convince the fashion world of its huge potential.

Taking place at the suitably glam Café Royal in Regent Street, the novelty of this much-anticipated event attracted the mobile international circus of models, buyers and press to town.

Riding high on the success of London Fashion Week proper, and the capital's enduring reputation as the hippest place on the planet, LMFW appears to have got off on the right foot. The designers on show, most of them far from being household names – as yet – must have been encouraged by the sheer amount of column inches generated by the event.

For Alexander Campbell and Lynn Mackie, their explosive and acclaimed 20-minute Alexander Campbell catwalk show on Thursday was the end product of a maddening, stressful, sleepless but highly rewarding roller-coaster two weeks.

Wednesday 1 July

It's damn hot in the basement of the Alexander Campbell (AC) shop in Covent Garden and there's not a fan to be found anywhere. The computer screen is burning out and clothes, for men and women, hang on rails in a seemingly haphazard way. Funny how the order of the upstairs retail area manages to emerge from the chaos. Perhaps a sign of things to come?

The phone rings – it never really stops – and Lynn, co-designer and wholesale director, is talking in her soft Edinburgh accent to Andrew from LMFW. She calmly tells him that AC will go for it, for two seasons. The show is on.

As a gesture of goodwill, LMFW offers AC sponsorship in the form of models from the So Damn Tuff agency. For a self-financed venture, every little bit helps, particularly as AC are too late to secure backing for the show from industry.

AC for women is one of the best kept secrets of the fashion industry. The likes of Denise Van Outen, Zoe Ball and the Spice Girls drop by from time to time. But they've never tried menswear before and now there's no going back.

It suddenly seems to dawn on Lynn that there are a million things to do and no time to do them. She hangs up, grins nervously and starts to vie for time with Olga, her Eastern European assistant suffering from a dodgy neck, and Joseph, the irrepressible PR.

Friday 3 July

In the basement, consumption of coffee and tea rises to dangerous levels. The team gathers and ideas flow. Carol, the stylist, and Adam, the debut make-up director, bang heads with Alex and Lynn.

Alex, ever regal, knows what he wants, sort of. A tough show to reflect the biker theme. There will be a lot of red and black leather to go with the soft greys of the suiting and the sleek, breezy knitwear. Carol and Adam agree that a light, healthy summer feel is required, but that the models selected will have to look like you wouldn't want to mess with their hair. Boxing types are mentioned and the idea of scarring their faces with dramatic raised "tissue" is born.

Joseph is thinking about which huyers to invite and where to seat them. He photocopies a plan of the catwalk area and then abandons it for a cigarette. There's always tomorrow.

Monday 6 July

Casting the models. Four very different girls are selected from the 30 who come along. Amongst them is Eirle, 24, from Norway. She is studying photography but has been modelling since she was 15 and worked with Alex on her first ever London job for *Vanity Fair*.



Lynn is controlling this session in her authoritarian way. She really knows the industry and is more focused than Alex.

Natasha, the show's director, arrives. Joseph points out Jo as the model who most personifies "the look" they're after.

He is from Belfast, with short hair, dancing eyes and a rugged torso.



Alex Campbell and Lynn Mackie prepare for the big day

The other models selected are an impressive and eclectic bunch of muscle, youth and colour. The one thing they have in common is that they all seem ridiculously laid back. Maybe that's why they exist – to counter the extremes of tension that bubble not far from the surface as show-time gets nearer.

Thursday 9 July

DJ Miss Jools arrives at the shop. She works one day a week for AC selling the collection but is going to be responsible for the show sound. She is resident DJ at The Cross in London's King's Cross, but has never mixed a live session for a fashion show before.

A special DJ booth will need to be commissioned and a monitor to allow her to mix in the beat and sound she wants. Alex and Lynn like the idea of starting off with a Martin Luther King monologue before the sound of growling engines and the beat kick in with the arrival of the models.

Alex points out that the pace has to be right since they have to move

down the catwalk with the rhythm of the music.

Friday 10 July

Natasha meets with Alex, Lynn and Joseph. They all agree that they want to pull a few surprises.

The models will definitely not emerge on to the runway from the normal place. Why not have them appear from out of the audience? Bring the lights up in stages instead of flooding the whole place with white light.

Olga's neck and back are no better. Lynn is worried about a factory that has nicked some AC fabric in an episode of what is known in the trade as "cabbaging". She and Alex will have to get the remainder of their wares out quickly and find a new supplier. But from where?

Alex and Lynn are straining to keep it all together. You wouldn't know it but they haven't been sleeping well. The knitwear has yet to arrive from Nottingham. The ballroom is "expected" from north London, the trousers from east London, separates from the south and all the

leather from west London. Alex is going to have to drive round and round London until the bloody stuff is on the models' backs.

Joseph really has to send out the show tickets soon and he has to write a strong press release to leave on the seats. Or maybe it can wait until Monday.

Tuesday 14 July

This is the first day of LMFW and there is a tangible buzz in the air. For AC, the first task is to set up the static exhibition so that potential buyers can peruse the collection at will and see the clothes.

Lynn has secured a great position on the floor. Other designers show their collections on the catwalk and are done with it. For Alex and Lynn the tension simply continues to mount even higher.

Quite unexpectedly, Troy from New York stops by at the AC stand and places a sizeable order for the menswear collection for his 'Antique Boutique'. Lynn takes it all in her stride but as Troy departs she affords herself a little smile of satisfaction.

Thursday 16 July

The day of the show. The team gathers in Covent Garden for an early morning, last-minute run through of the theory behind the show, but it's more of a team-building exercise. The tension is etched on everyone's face. Now on to the Café Royal.

Backstage, Joseph is directing the constant flow of arrivals with an uncanny certainty. The models moan around, waiting their turn on the make-up production line. Adam is working through them, assisted by his team. The finished item is impressive. The scars sit atop fresh, healthy faces that shine in the glare of the lights.

The doors suddenly burst open again and the clothes arrive from the downstairs exhibition area. Natasha and Carol start to hang them on rails in an order known only to them. Lynn is in every part of the room at once.

Alex fits in and out. He needs to pin his trousers but there aren't any pins. Jools arrives to find that there is no monitor. No monitor, no mix-

ing. This is the first serious crisis, because the models take their cues from breaks in the music. Keith Barker-Main from LMFW arrives and promises he will get a monitor. Jools doesn't look convinced.

Eirle, the Norwegian model, is reading a comic intently. The male models are smoking on-stop, passing around packets of cigarettes and cracking jokes. Every now and then one of them is plucked from the room to be fitted with a jacket or a pair of trousers.

The auditorium is packed. The banks of photographers are in place. The lights go down and the booming voice of Martin Luther King heralds the start of the show. Everybody is looking for the models in the wrong place, as desired. As they emerge from the audience, four strong, a sigh of approval emanates from the audience. This is theatre with great clothes.

Jools mixes in the motorbike sounds. Model after model appears as if by magic. The atmosphere mounts to a quite astounding climax and, for the first time, you really feel that the audience has become involved, transfixed by the superb fashion spectacle.

As the lights come up for one last time, the audience yells and cheers. Alex and Lynn, holding hands and beaming, are escorted down the runway by the applauding models.

Backstage, the champagne flows and Alex and Lynn, now tearful, are giving Joseph and the team hugs. Lynn's auntie looks proud. Alex's parents never had an anxious moment. They knew he was always going to pull it off.

The clothes are back on the ex-



hibition stand by the time the models are changed and in the back Joseph is talking to the buyer from Selfridge's.

Friday 17 July

All telephones are switched off and hours of messages have been left. The message light blinks silently.

THIS WEEK IN THE SEVEN-SECTION

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



Chief whip

'I imagine flogging someone is pretty exhausting, isn't it? How many would you do in a day?' 'Not many – but I might do longer sessions.' 'What's a long session?' 'The longest I like to do is 10 hours.'

Paul Theroux meets the bondage queen of New York

The summer that forgot cricket

It must have been guilt that did it, a sort of creeping, unobtrusive guilt that brought me to the counter in the local sports shop, where I found myself asking for advice on starter cricket bats for boys.

"And while I'm here, I'd better have a ball," the words tumbled out by themselves. "Nothing too hard, thanks. One of those rubber practice balls. Oh, and do bats still need linseed oil?"

No, I was told, modern bats did not need oiling, they are protected by some kind of laminate. But why all this cricket bat action, this summer of all summers, when cricket had barely registered on my sporting index?

That was just it, I realised. It was past midsummer and I had done nothing about trying to secure my annual game of cricket, or put aside a day for the Oval Test. With all eyes on the World Cup and Henman's run at Wimbledon, combined with a season of grey skies and wet grass, and the lowest of low-key Test series, this was The Summer that Forgot Cricket.

If the flannelled game had barely entered my consciousness beyond a winking glance at the Test scores, it fared worse with my sons. "Dad, are they playing cricket?" Darcy asked when we passed a team of die-hards limbering up for an evening match. This from a seven-year-old who can pronounce and spell such tongue-twisters as Zinedine Zidane, Cesar Sampaio and Croatia with uncanny accuracy. (Who said watching football promotes ignorance?)

Now I'm hardly the most devoted aficionado, but I thought cricket should be present for the boys as part of their cultural hinterland: no more than an option, perhaps, but nevertheless a permanent part of their baggage, like a few lines of Shakespeare, committed to memory, or an appreciation of marmalade on toast for breakfast. In their adult years, when they're citizens of a single-currency United States of Europe, an acquaintance with the rules and lore of cricket will be one of the few reminders that the English were ever noticeably



PARK LIFE
BRUCE MILLAR

different from their European partners.

My own cricket career was effectively scuppered at the age of nine, when I was appointed captain of the School Duds to play the Mums XI. (The Fathers played against our First XI.) My father and I had a week of evenings in the back garden to train my mother in the skills of cricket. We did not do very well. By the day of the match, Mum had still not managed to bowl a ball on the wicket: indeed, it looked very much as if she would never complete a regulation six-ball over unless the umpire abandoned the rule that wides do not count as balls.

So the big day arrived. I won the toss, elected to bat, and – captain's prerogative – decided to open the innings myself. When I appeared at the wicket, the Mothers' captain asked to whom I belonged, and put my Mum on to bowl. This was too much for my nascent malehood to resist – my own mother, who could not bowl for toffee. My heart leapt and I wound the bat back for a mighty swipe that would surely knock the ball for six.

Mum's arm swung over, and the ball plopped to the ground about halfway down the track. I knew at once that it was plumb on target, and that it was not going to bounce: she had bowled me a sneak. I also knew that I was committed, that all I could do was try to hit it for a four at least.

I missed. The ball rolled on and struck middle stump, knocking the bails to the ground. My mother's

squeal of astonished triumph died in her mouth as she realised what she had done, and my view of the scene dissolved in watery tears. I remember nothing else about the match beyond my father taking a pretty dim view of Mum's admittedly fluky sin against motherhood, but from that point on cricket was Not My Game.

I took it up again when I was living in Sydney in my twenties, and hilarious Sunday matches played under the hot Australian sun between rival newspaper offices proved an attractive proposition. This was never more than occasional, partly because it seemed unreasonable to inflict cricket widowhood on my wife, and she was never one for making sandwiches (apart from a brief interlude when she attempted to make a living selling sarnies on Sydney's nudist beaches under the trade name Nude Food).

Ginny did deign to attend one match, and was embarrassed to watch me saunter to the wicket, bag in one hand, can of beer in the other, at 10.30am. To make matters worse, the first time the ball was hit towards me, I stepped aside and let someone else chase after it. Such was her embarrassment that she walked to the far side of the ground so she would not have to hear the abuse that I surely deserved. Only later did she realise I had simply been taking my turn to be ref, as she put it.

It is for moments like these, I suppose, that I bought the bat and ball for Tom and Darcy. A week or so later, I was in the sports shop again, this time buying a starter set, complete with stumps, batting gloves and pads for my nephew's seventh birthday. Again I felt a little guilty, this time that I'd landed my Paraguayan brother-in-law, Oscar, in a slice of Anglo culture that he could live without.

But never mind the cricket: my nephew was bound to welcome a present that involved so much hefty gear, even if he only used it as armour for fights with his big brother.

Gaudy flashing casino signs line the roads through New Mexico's native American reservations, advertising the Indians' new source of wealth. But the state has its eye on their money. By Mary Dejevsky

Getting rich with the casino tribes

YOU ARE driving north along Route 68 from Santa Fe, New Mexico, with only the moon and the stars for company, when the blackness is rudely interrupted by a pulsating, garish signboard. "In only 2.8 miles your luck could change!"

For the next stretch of 40 miles or so, there are dozens of these all-singing, all-dancing signs, adorned with bright flashing animal motifs and other symbols. Clearly, even if your luck is not about to change, someone else's already has. That someone is the once despised and rejected American Indian.

Of 19 Indian pueblos in the state of New Mexico, 14 now have gaming licences, although only 11 currently operate casinos. From small beginnings - many of the tribes used to run a fairly basic form of bingo - the reservations now boast state-of-the-art gambling palaces catering to thousands of mainly non-Indian customers: locals from Santa Fe and the surrounding areas as well as visitors from neighbouring Texas, Arizona and Oklahoma. The income is transforming the landscape, in every possible sense.

Five years ago, when I last drove this road, it was a desolate, eerily empty landscape of scrub desert and stark hills that glow red in the sunset. Markers announced that you were entering or leaving a reservation. The more commercially conscious tribes had inconspicuous signs directing visitors down a dirt road to their shop or pottery. It was a toss-up whether, when you arrived, it would be derelict, closed, or just not interested in selling.

Take any reservation, and it would be littered with rusted cars and machinery; the few dwellings were reminiscent of South Africa's black townships under apartheid: tin roofs, scruffy yards, no running water, litter everywhere. The reservations were, and in many parts of the United States still are, testimony to a racial and cultural separation that would not be tolerated in most developed countries.

Now, though, at least among the "gambling" tribes of New Mexico, that is changing. "Our native American entrepreneurial spirit is working" says another set of placards along that same Route 68, advertising an Indian construction company. And the evidence is there for all to see. The flashing signs are matched by bulky new casinos, clearly visible from the road. New houses with recent cars in front of them dot the landscape. There is new building and more new building far into the reservations.

One of the most successful of the "gambling" reservations is the Pojoaque pueblo, 26 miles north of Santa Fe, which has just opened the first Indian-owned luxury hotel in the state. The hotel, with 140 rooms, a shop and restaurant, is the latest addition to the Clites of Gold complex, which also has a shopping mall, a museum and cultural centre and, of course - the fount of all subsequent development - a casino.

In the month that it has been open, the hotel has been operating at 70 per cent occupancy and, at weekends, to capacity, even though



Mystic Lake Casino in Minnesota: 'Our native American entrepreneurial spirit is working'

Per Brithagen/Black Star

it has not yet been promoted. The two-year-old casino complex (which replaced an older makeshift structure, now the "Sports Bar", a little way down the road) has nearly 1,000 video slot machines, an electronic bingo hall, gaming tables for roulette and blackjack, a restaurant of its own and snack bar - but no alcohol. In New Mexico, as in much of the US, sins - where legal

Cities of Gold is cagey about how much money the tribe earns from its gambling palace

- may be committed only singly. At weekends, the casino operates round the clock, and at 9pm on a Friday night, cars were circling the mammoth car-park in search of a space. The tingo hall is packed to capacity. Inside, you would have been hard put to find a slot machine that was not occupied. From white-haired grannies in Crippleware to hulky lads in blue jeans, everyone was concentrating on the task in hand; men and women, whites, blacks, browns and Indians side by

side, making up one of the most racially integrated scenes I have witnessed anywhere in the States.

Cities of Gold is understandably cagey about exactly how much the tribe earns from its gambling palace, but the figure runs into tens of millions of dollars. And from this money, flows more money. Having cash allows the reservation to take out bank loans that were never available to Indians before. A golf course, resort complex, swimming pool and conference centre are planned for the year 2000.

Running the commercial and planning side of the reservation is James Rivera, a clean-cut forty-something who grew up on the reservation until his father took him to the big city (Santa Fe) to go to a better school. School was not his métier but Rivera thrived in work. He can hardly remember a time he did not work. From a paper round at 13, to all manner of small jobs. Then, attracted by the sports opportunities on offer, he joined the army medical corps.

Twelve years later, again restless, he returned to Pojoaque pueblo, persuading his uncle, the chief, to take him on as his assistant. Now, after a stint with the National Indian Gaming Association and lobbying in Washington, he is President of the

Pojoaque Enterprises Corporation (PPEC) and is de facto supremo - subject to the spending approval of the pueblo council - of the tribe's commercial future.

Rivera is proud of Pojoaque's achievements, and of its priorities. An unemployment rate in the 80 per cent range has been reduced to near zero, thanks to the casino and shopping mall. There is a new nursery, youth club and basketball court, and a new senior citizens' centre. Construction of a clinic has begun. There is an emphasis on education, with grants and scholarships available for those who want to study off the reservation, and the new cultural centre teaches the tribal language and trains young people in traditional Indian crafts - for which there are now nationally recognised credits. The pueblo employs its own police and now has nine squad cars.

If Rivera has his way, life on the reservation could in time offer a good deal more security for the Pojoaque Indians, and perhaps no less opportunity, than life outside it.

But nothing is quite so simple: money has brought its own problems. There is criticism (from inside and outside the Indian world) about how the gambling windfall is spent. Not from Pojoaque, but else-

where, come tales of individual chiefs growing rich, building lavish personal palaces, buying expensive cars and even boats, rather than investing in the reservation.

That, says Rivera, is a MYTH - and he makes sure that I write this in my notebook in capital letters. Rivera himself drives a small BMW, but the new houses and cars at the Pojoaque pueblo seemed generally modest. He says that the biggest change to his tribe from jobs and money had been in personal dignity and expectations: "How shall I put it, people are looking after themselves better". In other words, the slovenliness that so often characterised Indians on the reservations is starting to disappear.

Perhaps more worrying for the tribes than others' resentment is whether the new income will continue to flow back on to their reservations at current rates - for the state is now eyeing their new money with more than casual interest. It was only last year that the New Mexican state legislature - after a struggle lasting nearly five years - legalised most forms of gambling. The price to the Indians, however, was a 16 per cent tax on casino earnings. The tribes signed the deal under protest and are refusing to pay. That amount of tax,

they object, would make gambling unprofitable and halt most of their development projects.

Negotiations have now opened, with the tribes insisting that anything more than three or four per cent would be unacceptable. But some feel strongly that they should not be liable to pay state tax at all: are not Indian tribes and their lands

There are tales of chiefs building lavish personal palaces rather than investing in the reservation

sovereign (and so exempt from state tax), according to the terms on which the land was ceded to them? State officials pose essentially the same question from a different angle. If some Indian tribes are growing rich, how come they continue to enjoy big government subsidies, for their schools and social benefits? Should the hand-outs not be concentrated in the poorer, by and large traditionalist, tribes which have rejected gambling as a solution? And in this country of

self-help, why shouldn't rich tribes be expected to help poor tribes - so relieving the state of a large burden? Tribal leaders have let it be known that they would take a very dim view of any redistribution of casino money by the state, but the already sharp disparities between gambling and non-gambling tribes make such a solution tempting, and there is little sign as yet of the tribes taking such a function upon themselves.

Finally, and most sensitively, there is the "culture" question. Even on so flourishing a reservation as Pojoaque, the new communal buildings already have scuffs and broken windows and litter. Although professionals have been brought in from outside to run the hotel and casino, service in the restaurant is, by American standards, lethargic and several menu items were "off today". It is not impossible to imagine that the reservation could slide back into neglect just as quickly as it emerged.

Indians tend to blame such doubts on the "Anglo" mindset that cannot get to grips with the idea of rich Indians, preferring the ideal of the "noble savage" and the reality of uncompetitive losers kept on reservations, out of sight and mind. But time spent on the newly thriving reservations leaves a swirl of contradictory impressions.

It is surely good that at least some Indian tribes have started to prosper. In a political system that runs on paid lobbying, the most long-suffering ethnic minority in the US is starting to have a voice. There is even the risk that things Indian (sorry, native American) are becoming fashionable.

Smoke Signals, the first Indian-produced (and mildly anti-American) feature film was released recently, and is playing to packed houses. President Clinton has included an Indian representative in his latest race relations forum for the first time. He regretted that Indians had got "the worst of both worlds" at the hands of the authorities, and claimed to have Indian blood through a grandmother who was one-quarter Cherokee.

And while gambling may not be the most salubrious of businesses, the Indians have a point when they say that the neglect and prejudice they faced from mainstream America left them with few other avenues for self-improvement. Rivera's idea is that the Pojoaque tribe will eventually throw off the stigma by making the casino just one part of a top-notch resort.

But there is a downside. Even if social harmony prevails on the reservations for the time being, gambling money is potentially divisive. Already, it is dividing rich tribes from poor and complicating relations with the authorities. It is also fuelling breakneck development in some of the most spectacular landscape in north America, with scant regard for the environmental and aesthetic consequences.

That, though, is the rich man's view. If I were an Indian, I would be 100 per cent behind the Pojoaque and their casino. After centuries of indigence, what have they to lose?

You don't have to be butch to talk about penalty shoot-outs

A new breed of female commentators is taking the sporting world by storm. By Laura Thompson

OVER THE past few weeks, you may have noticed that, even in our enlightened society, World Cup punditry is still very much a job for the boys. Those cosy studios are men-only zones, where Desmond Lynam plays mine host and where no female is allowed to intrude upon the *amour fou* that exists between Alan Hansen and Jimmy Hill. But I would lay money that, come 2002, women will have stormed those citadels. After all, the female sports presenter (FSP) constitutes one of the great growth industries. Cast your mind back only a decade and it is impossible to think of any woman in this kind of job: sport was served to you by men and that was that.

Indeed, as far as I am aware, the only female in their midst was Christine Jones (née Truman), who lost the Wimbledon singles final some time in the 19th century and who, on the strength of this, was allowed to spend the Wimbledon fortnight with the men in the BBC radio commentary box. She is still there, still

sounding as though she has dropped in on her way to buy lavender water at Bentalls at Kingston, and still replete with knowledge.

And yet Jones's "feminine" demeanour seems to belong to a different species from the women who have erupted over the past few years into the world of sport, proliferating with amazing speed, taking up positions as presenters, anchors, commentators and pundits.

These FSPs are not there simply to supplement, with ladylike observations or two, the sum of male sporting wisdom. As indeed they should be, they are there by right: the confident product of a decade that created, and now celebrates, the remarkably successful romance between women and sport.

And so *Grandstand* is fronted by Sue Barker, Hazel Irvine and - the first woman to do so - Helen Rollason. Radio 5 Live's marathon weekend afternoon programmes are regularly anchored by Eleanor O'Drory. Clare Balding, who also

works for Radio 5 Live, is the chief presenter of the racing. These women have all, too, played important roles in broadcasting major sporting events like Wimbledon, the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

Then there is Anna Walker, one of the best known presenters on Sky; Shelley Webb, who co-hosts *Live and Dangerous* on Channel 5; Lesley Graham at *Channel 4 Racing*; the list goes on. In fact, so familiar nowadays are these cued-up females that it is scarcely necessary to draw attention to their presence.

Yet, only recently, a newspaper article focused upon the imminent arrival at Sky of Kelly Dalglish, daughter of Kenny. It linked her name with that of Gaby Yorath, daughter of the ex-Leeds United player, Terry, who is soon to co-present a football show for ITV. The subject was nepotism: if you want a career as a sports presenter, it helps if your prospective producer wants your father's autograph.

But there was a subtext to the



Gaby Yorath, soon to present a football show for ITV, and Radio 5 Live's Clare Balding, are "there by right"



piece, underlined by the accompanying photographs: if you want a career as a sports presenter, it helps if you are a young and attractive female. Had Kelly been Kevin and Gaby been Gary, the article would not, I feel, have been written.

Above all, the Dalglishes and Yoraths are noteworthy because they represent a second phase in the life of the FSP phenomenon. In the earlier days, FSPs were rather sexless creatures. Helen Rollason, the pioneering presenter of BBC's *Sport on Friday* in 1990, was pleasant-looking but she seemed, at that time, scared to be anything other than Steve Rider in a Jacques Vert blouse. She was a woman, but at the same time she was very much a female man.

Almost certainly, this was a de-

liberate play on the part of the BBC to reassure the viewer that nothing had changed. Yes, an extraordinary breakthrough had been made, but fear not: this woman was not going to start feeling Linford Christie's biceps or giggling when Richie Benaud talked about bowling a maiden over.

Since then, however, things have relaxed considerably. Sue Barker for example, has become an accomplished presenter, but she is not afraid to use or show her femininity. Faced on *A Question of Sport* with an outrageously flirtatious David Ginola, she dissolved into blushing confusions, and in an odd way her credibility gained strength from it. Suddenly, she made it clear that women who work in sport do not

have to become honorary men in order to succeed.

There is, of course, a downside to the second phase in the life of the FSP. Having overcome the idea that they should suppress their female-ness, there is now a possibility that some will be encouraged to flaunt it. You can just imagine the wrong kind of producer's idea of a cutting-edge sports presenter: a walking, talking GQ cover, a Fantasy Football League Ladette.

However, despite their luscious photos, there is no suggestion that either Kelly Dalglish or Gaby Yorath is that kind of FSP. Both have experience at Sky Television and both, it has to be said, have the right background. The fact is that the daughters of footballers probably know

more than most about football.

After all, as long as FSPs know what they are talking about, they can carry on their triumphal march towards the complete acceptance enjoyed by female newsmakers. And, as they do so, carrying the flag will surely be the BBC's Clare Balding. Again, she is "someone's daughter" - but while having trainer Ian Balding as a father has put her in a position to know about racing, it can hardly have helped her acquire such an assured presence. You would be tempted to say that she is the best FSP of them all, were it not that she is simply one of the best sports presenters. When the next World Cup comes around, I would lay odds that she will be the one who storms that citadel of blokeodism.

James Kelman is an acclaimed author abroad. But in his native Scotland he's still a pariah. By Nicky Agate

Author, academic, outcast

Drinking black coffee in a vegetarian cafe in the West End of Glasgow, Jim Kelman seems at ease away from the popular portrayal of the Scottish author as an inebriated, difficult recluse.

He is quietly spoken, yet insistent and articulate; his statements are considered and convincing. For years he and a core group of Scottish writers such as Tom Leonard and Agnes Owens have been fighting against the imposition of another culture upon their lives and the suppression of their own language, often patronisingly dismissed as "dialect", by a distant imperial England.

Born in Glasgow in 1946, Kelman gave up hopes of professional football and left school at 15, experimenting with a number of professions before returning to Glasgow in 1972, where he joined a local writing group and first encountered Leonard and Alasdair Gray.

His first book was published in the US, foreshadowing a future of popularity and acclaim abroad that he has never experienced in his own country. His work is banned from Scottish classrooms, he has been condemned by the Saltire Society and the SNP and, due to a change of influence within the Scottish Arts Council, he is one of many Scots authors to be completely ignored by a body that is meant to encourage.

His work is studied at the University of Glasgow under the auspicious course title "Foreign Literature in Translation". An outcast in his own city, like that of other Scots, confined to a separate section of many Scottish bookstores, he finds the situation terribly sad.

"My work gets taught in other countries as a normal thing, as literature, and yet here it's foreign," he says. "When I go abroad, it really is a breath of fresh air to be treated as a writer, because that doesn't happen in this country. It's like being an ethnic in your own community."

Next week sees the publication of Kelman's first fiction since *How Late It Was, How Late*, the novel that sparked yet another Booker controversy in 1994, causing one of the judges to leave the panel in protest, berating the prize-winning work as a disgrace.

Kelman withdrew his novel from other literary shortlists and took a while to recover from the hostility. "It continued for a long time, and I had

to fight hard to sustain and rediscover my concentration."

That healing process undoubtedly added to the last four years, though he has not been dormant, using the time to pen two full-length plays and a book of political essays, as well as *The Good Times*.

The Good Times is an assemblage of first person narratives, snapshots of the lives of different men at distinct stages in their lives, all from slightly different backgrounds. The book starts with "Joe Laughed", the tale of a football-mad youngster, and ends with the title story, "The Good Times", in which a man comes to terms with his own mortality.

At 52, Kelman has been forced to consider debilitation himself, as ac-

'My work gets taught in other countries as literature, and yet here it's foreign. It's like being an ethnic in your own community'

quaintances have begun to disappear and his legendary fondness for a pint takes its toll. "You start to look for reasons why, and then it dawns on you: 'Of course, this is another form of old age.' You may have been boozing all your life, and suddenly it gets more difficult to sustain."

He never gets a hangover.

The most impressive aspect of Kelman's talent is his ability to take these everyday Glaswegian lives and make them seem individually exotic - determined characters showing the world that their existence, like their language, is as valid as that of the next man.

"There's a freedom in some of the stories that felt good, and in the writing it sometimes can be exhilarating," he says. "I don't experience it that much, it's not a common thing. But it's nice when it does happen. Then again, sometimes a story that exhilarates you doesn't always move you. But the great thing about being an artist is that sometimes you find your own work moving."

The great thing, however, can often be eclipsed by the more press-

ing worries of everyday life, and with a wife and daughters to support in a country where art is often seen as mere self-indulgence, Kelman has had many a battle with his conscience: "You consistently have to ask yourself whether or not your work is a valid thing to be involved in at the expense of something that your children don't have. It stops a lot of artists from doing their work properly and makes a lot of others compromise too quickly."

Compromise is an important issue to him, he holds his work close and his strict political ideals won't let him fall by the capitalist wayside. Radio, for instance, has been a closed area for Kelman and many other contemporary authors unwilling to confront the substance of their work to please a certain audience. However, Radio 3 recently showed surprising broadness of mind when it commissioned one of Kelman's plays, a version of the story "Comic Cuts" in *The Good Times*, allowing him to write for radio for the first time in 20 years.

"They would have preferred to remove a lot of the swearing," he chuckles, eyes twinkling. "But what they've done is change the time of the slot." He sees this as a major breakthrough for radio, and hopes that at long last the airwaves will stop censoring the everyday sounds of the street.

While the broadcast media might be making small steps towards accepting the credibility of other cultures, Kelman believes oppression still surrounds our lives to a numbing degree, be it through social marginalisation, cultural fascism or the destruction of the entire fabric of existence in places such as Kurdistan. "These are issues that artists should be aware of, because society assumes a freedom of expression. And really there is only that in literature, we're the only ones who don't get censored."

Kelman is an active human rights campaigner and sees the protection of one's cultural identity and the ability to be proud of that culture as the inherent privilege of every individual. "You have to admire the French," he says. "There's a terrible onslaught coming on the world from the Anglo-American side, and the French resist it, they've always resisted it. Their arrogance is self-preservation, and I think other cultures should be fighting for that."

Kelman is by no means a man of



Jim Kelman: 'The great thing... is that sometimes you find your own work moving' Rex Features

more words. He is taking advantage of the launch of *The Good Times* in Glasgow, Edinburgh and London as an opportunity to promote the cause of the Turkish writer and sociologist Ismail Besiki, who has spent the last twelve years in prison under an oppressive regime that can execute

a man who sings in the Kurdish language. Outcast by his own, Kelman seeks to befriended others who suffer injustice, marginalised by a society too blinkered to understand.

Husband, father, politician. Writer and cultural protector. Come August, James Kelman will be a visiting fel-

low at the University of Texas. Maybe it's time Britain appreciated her literary pioneer before he follows his ancestors way out west in search of the real good times.

'The Good Times' is published on Thursday by Secker and Warburg

Louder, larger, brasher ... safer

COMEDY

LENNY HENRY
HARLEQUIN THEATRE
REDHILL, SURREY

LENNY HENRY is a stranger to the concept of volume control - in his clothes as much as his voice. It is no coincidence that two of his previous live shows have gone by the unambiguous titles of "Loud!" and "Larger than Life".

He bounded on stage on Thursday in a red plaid suit loud enough to be heard in the neighbouring county and with all the excess energy of Don Juan on Viagra. In the next hour, he proceeded to release more sweat than most of the audience probably do in a year. In a rare lull, he kept up his level of activity by shadow-boxing on the spot.

He opened by giving it some serious Mick Jagger, whooping "are we ready to have a good time?" as if to a leather-jacketed Wembley Stadium crowd rather than an audience at the Harlequin Theatre in Redhill, Surrey, where the car-coat seems rather more prominent. He went on to impersonate everyone, from Trevor MacDonald to a woman on *The Jerry Springer Show* who admits to her boyfriend of two years that she is, in fact, a man.

Henry's domain is very much mainstream. Third Way comedy, he is much more Tony Blair than Ken Livingstone. With his jokes about ordering curry and his wife's driving, he is hardly stepping into dangerously subversive territory. No risk here of frightening the horses of Middle England with tasteless jokes about Diana's death or *outré* sexual practices. And you are more likely to see a badger parade than a surrealistic routine at a Lenny Henry show.

But let's forget about labels. Henry passes the stand-up acid test: he makes you laugh - with pleasing frequency. He is at his best when occupying that mythical common ground with the audience. There were nods of recognition when he recalled the porn mags of his childhood: "Wasn't public hair bigger in those days?"

More laughs of agreement were heard when he reflected on the proof that he is now growing old: rather than ogling scantily clad women in the street, these days he says to them, "Come on, you'll catch your death walking around like that". Henry may be about as alternative as a round of pro-celebrity golf with Bruce and Larry. But his stated aim on stage is to get a laugh every 15 seconds, and although I was not using a stopwatch, I reckon his hit-rate did not fall much below that.

JAMES RAMPTON

This review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper



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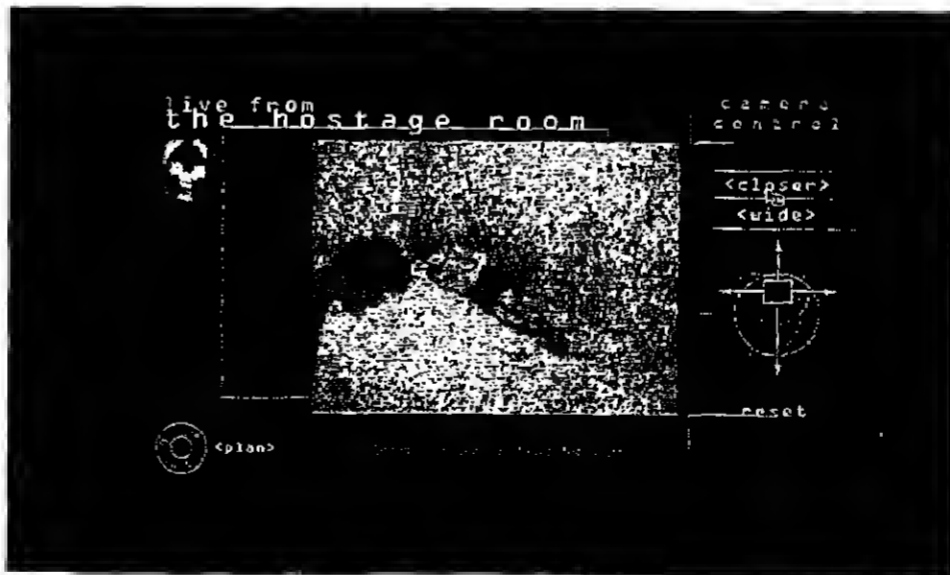
PERFORMANCE

KIDNAP
BLAST THEORY

A YOUNG man in a khaki T-shirt stands up, sits down, fiddles with his sock, crosses his feet, uncrosses his feet, stands up, lies down, rubs his nose. Across the room, a woman with long brown hair coughs, adjusts her mini-skirt, tucks a piece of hair behind her ear, tugs again at her skirt, coughs some more. "Mumble mumble, Radio 4 mumble," says the man. "Mumble library..." says the woman. Silence. Cough. Silence.

It could have been a scene from a Harold Pinter play, but we are actually watching two kidnap victims cooped up in their safe-house, live on the Internet. A couple of months ago the hostages paid a £10 fee to enter an abduction lottery organised by experimental theatre company Blast Theory. Now the "lucky winners" have been nabbed and locked in a tiny featureless room, its ceiling, floor and windowless walls lined with coarse chipboard.

At home on the web, viewers peer at these two trapped flies. At the twitch of a mouse you can pan the camera round the cell, strain to catch a snatch of conversation, watch as the abductees don pillow-case hoods as their captors enter the room. "Can't you make them do something?" asks a net-watcher, typing into the on-line chat room. "This is so boring."



Kidnapped: hostage Deborah Burgess live on the Net

"Wouldn't it be lovely if they fell in love?" coos Helen from Blast Theory, staring into the computer at the digital Kidnap HQ at London's ICA (there is another control room at Manchester's Green Room). "I keep looking, just in case."

"Describe your fantasy kidnap," the application forms had asked. Chocolate, buxom wenches, unlimited women's magazines, handsome aristocrats, replied the applicants. No one mentioned stale sandwiches and chipboard.

At 9pm on Tuesday, 27-year-old Australian temp Deborah Burgess went for a drink at the Rat & Parrot on Gloucester Road. As she headed off for the lavatory, three abductors frog-

marched her up the stairs and bundled her into a van. She should have received a letter warning her she was under surveillance: she had not. The Blast Theory application form was a distant memory. If she had remembered, she might not have gone out that evening in high heels, stockings and a crocheted mini-skirt.

She had read all the disclaimers, agreed to the conditions, begged the theatre company to "please pick me"; she'd been loving the past couple of months' travelling in England and this would be "the icing on the cake". Like an S&M experimentee, she could have stopped the action by calling out her safe word. So why

should we feel sorry for her? Was this any different from a TV gameshow grab?

Try seeing her red-eyed and tank-haired, snagged skirt and heavily laddered legs, 61 hours later, released into the camera-flashing glare of a press conference. Do Blast Theorists Matt Adams and Ju Row Farr feel guilty? "Why?" they ask. "We played by the rules. It was quite hard for us being bored watching you being bored."

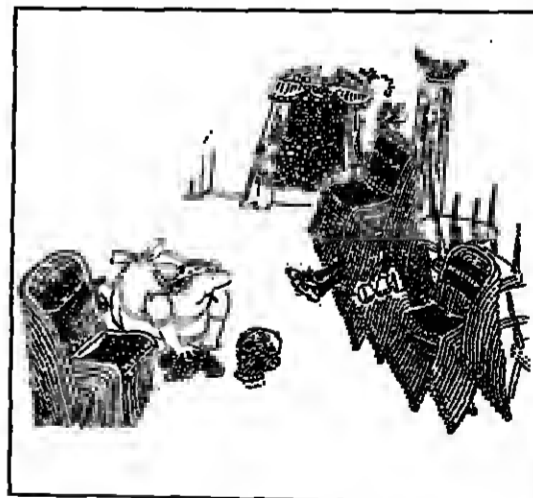
Did it feel like theatre? "I know they were performing," says Deborah, chin quivering, "but for me it was real."

JUDITH PALMER

www.newmediacentre.com/kidnap/

CLASSIC CARTOONS

MARTIN PLIMMER ON
GERARD HOFFNUNG



GERARD HOFFNUNG was that rare thing among cartoonists - an extrovert.

So extrovert in fact, that cartooning was not enough for him. He was also a musician, arranger, raconteur and showman, and he could roll his right eye in a complete circle while keeping the left one still.

Sometimes, he combined all these things in novel and startling ways.

His sense of humour is a testament to his humanity. As a German Jew growing up in Nazi Germany, he attended a school next door to Hitler's house in Berlin.

It was Hoffnung, at the age of 11, who knocked on Hitler's

door and asked the SS guard if he could have his ball back.

Was this his first performance joke? This baptism of fire must have made subsequent performances seem easy.

Soon afterwards, his parents escaped to England where he soon developed the manner and lazy-posh enunciation of an old English gent.

Here he was given free reign to indulge his wildest fantasies, from gala concerts at the Queen Elizabeth Hall for orchestra and Hoovers, to hilarious debates at the Oxford Union. And of course hundreds of cartoons. When he died of a brain haemorrhage in 1959, he was only 34.

Try not to trash the place

The rockumentary is back. And this time it's serious. Michael Collins on the post-Spinal Tap generation

It was once thought that *This Is Spinal Tap* had laid to rest the ghost of the rock documentary. The re-emergence of the form, even in the name of irony, seemed about as likely as the news that air guitar and concept albums were the next big thing.

But the music business never ceases to surprise - the "rockumentary" is about to enjoy a renaissance. It resurfaces as part of a wider trend in which television, always last with the muse, is producing a series of dramas with rock groups central to the plot. Sets and plugs and rock 'n' roll is all the brain and body need.

Traditionally, the rock documentary is the point that a band decides to get serious. When the Rolling Stones made *Sympathy For The Devil*, it was during their street fighting years, when Mick Jagger strutted on the fringes of the Grosvenor Square riots. The film put Jean-Luc Godard in the director's chair.

Other films in the genre have also attracted the great and the good: Martin Scorsese (*The Last Waltz*), Jonathan Demme (*Stop Making Sense*). The works themselves had their moments. The Beatles on the roof of the Apple building in *Let It Be*; Bob Dylan's cue-card routine from DA Pennebaker's *Don't Look Back*. The same director's *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust* is notable as the filmed concert in which David Bowie "retired". It was recently re-enacted in its entirety as an art event by a tribute band at the ICA. The current crop of subjects for the Nineties round of rock documentaries are all serious, straight boy bands, at home between the pages of Q magazine.

Films on Radiohead and the Manic Street Preachers are nearing completion, with The Verve rumoured to be next. "These bands are not ironic acts," says Grant Gee, director of the Radiohead film *Meeting People Is Easy*. "Radiohead are a band that try to express powerful feelings without being embarrassed. I wanted to make a film that puts that across with great songs."

The film depicts a year in the life of the band, following their travels in the wake of the release of the album *OK Computer*. At one point, vocalist Thom Yorke remarks, "We're the post-Spinal Tap generation. Everything we do and have done has been taken the piss out of."

So why lay themselves open with a film form that has become synonymous with a parodic heavy metal group? According to Grant Gee, "The idea was to take five nice



Can anyone take film profiles of rock bands seriously after Spinal Tap held the form up to such brilliant ridicule?

young men from Oxfordshire and show how they and their music are processed. It's a seamless ride through various media."

The camera is not cast as the peeping Tom catching private thoughts, and the mythic moments peculiar to pop life are conspicuous by their absence: no shots of a group shooting up; no groupies going down. And the TV sets stay put. With a culture now obsessed with the revelatory and the confessional, and with the public itself now willing to live life through the lens, it follows that for a Nineties rock documentary to succeed, it would need to call in every cliché and then drive it to the extreme. Anything less would not keep the customers satisfied, surely.

Meeting People Is Easy settles for being a form of "surveillance", according to its director. "Bands are less culturally significant these days, and their lives are not seen as glamorous," he says. "The film shows the side of the industry that is about grotty hotel rooms, the repetition of gigs, photo shoots, in-

terviews, signings. It holds a mirror up to the media holding a mirror up to the band."

Last year's championing of pop's likely lads, by the former musician now the Prime Minister, confirmed that a new establishment had been created. The *NME* was within, it wasn't Woodstock, but by the time

chians has, like Britannia, cooled of late, television is currently zealous in its pursuit of all things pop. *Meeting People Is Easy* is likely to reach the small screen after a stint in the cinema and, in the video stores, the Manic Street Preachers' documentary features in the new BBC arts strand *Close-Up*. "The rock docu-

Cracked Actor in 1975, arts programming has had the occasional date with pop music. Its current infatuation may echo the hopes of Camille Paglia's celebration of Rock as Art, that appeared in *The New York Times*. "All the Romantic archetypes of energy, passion, rebellion and demonism are still evident in the bawling, boozing, bad boys of rock, storming from city to city on their lusty, groupie-dogged trail."

This is obviously no longer the case, and yet television is suddenly putting rock and pop in everything from documentary to drama. Clearly, the blame lay with Britpop: "It's a generational thing," maintains Mike Connolly. "Much of Britpop music was inspired by the Sixties. This was the music that a lot of commissioning editors recognised."

While the rock documentary has returned, it is left to TV drama to chronicle the rise and fall of the effete and fey pop star. The BBC has plans to screen the Boy George autobiography *Take It Like a Man*. A Sixties girl group are the subject of the BBC series *Sex and Chits and*

Rock and Roll, with a Nineties indie band in the Channel 4 series *The Young Person's Guide To Becoming a Rock Star*. Channel 4 is also making a drama series about a Boyzone-style band entitled *Boys Unlimited*. The last time music had this kind of profile in TV drama was in 1976 when *Rock Follies* was on the air and punk was in the air.

In June of this year, Alan McGee, the man who signed Oasis, claimed that CD sales were collapsing because of the potential to download on the Internet, and that rock bands faced extinction. "There is no rebellion in rock," he said. "There is no generation gap any more. You can be 37 and go with your 64-year-old dad and your 14-year-old cousin to see the same band."

Or they watch the same rock documentary and the same rock drama. The kids are all right and so are their parents.

Now that the bands have stopped throwing television sets out of hotel rooms, it might be the turn of the viewer to pick up the set and break a few lounge windows.

'Mythic moments are conspicuous by their absence: no shots of a group shooting up...'

they got to Whitehall they were how many strong? The rock documentary's return is timely in the current climate. At one end, pop's elder statesmen are landing bites like Sir Paul, or commanding *An Audience With*, like Rod and Elton. At the other is employment minister Andrew Smith's "rock 'n' roll" scheme, on which unemployed musicians may become pop stars.

Although the relationship between pop musicians and politi-

mentary is a debased form since *Spinal Tap*, says director Mike Connolly. "It is no longer enough to see bands lounging around backstage. It needs to tell a bigger story. 'The Manic Street Preachers documentary is the story of an intellectual, working class band from South Wales, but it's also the story of something that came out of the ashes of the miners strike.'"

Since David Bowie was caught on film in Alan Yentoh's BBC film

The naked truth about Bob Flowerdew's fridge

THE BOUNDARIES of what counts as private life are being pushed back all the time. The Internet has already done live birth and will soon be offering live sex, while television has now come around to placenta-eating and death. And even radio is doing its own little bit to draw back the curtains. This week, we heard the first ever naked Gardeners' Question Time (Radio 4, Sunday), recorded in front of an entirely unclothed audience at the British Naturalist Foundation in Orpington (whose members have presumably heard more jokes about Orpington huffs than the rest of us have had hot

dinners, so let's just assume we have done that one).

It would be nice to treat the whole affair in a mature way, without sniggering, but this isn't easy when you have Bob Flowerdew explaining that his fridge smells of "essence of old pea", to general hilarity. One thing that can be said in favour of this whole venture is that it could never have been done on television; on the other hand, the reason it could be done on radio was that there was nothing remotely interesting about it. This edition was distinguished from a normal GQT by the amount of outdoor noise - aeroplanes,

THE WEEK ON RADIO

REVIEWED BY
ROBERT HANKS

children playing, birdsong. But the only indication of the amount of flesh slapping around was a timorously offered quip about the dangers of holly and some by-play about plants that are called "Naked Ladies" and "Bluelegs".

The banter was a little less coy on Talk Radio's Wireless Wedding

("The best reception in Britain"), last Friday afternoon. Tommy Boyd and Tara Newley were on the spot at Amberley Castle in Sussex, hosting what was supposedly Britain's first live broadcast of a non-royal wedding, between Sue Backhouse and John Barry: meanwhile Mike Allen was holding the fort back in London - "I'm holding it here, Mr Boyd," Mike joked. "Firmly between your thighs," said Tara. Quick as a flash, Tommy followed up: "With both hands!" All this attention to his nether regions seemed to go to Mike's head: when the conversation turned to cars he suddenly




announced that only real men drive small cars, adding "I drive a Mini". Elsewhere, Tara wandered around admiring the scenery ("It is achingly romantic here. You can almost imagine men in tights, perhaps, roaming the grounds, can you not?"), and Tommy Boyd offered his own, presumably unconscious, metaphor for the business of marriage by throwing himself down a dark hole and screaming when he hit the bottom. Some of the time, the two of them joined forces to compare their thoughts, which turned out to be remarkably similar. "This," Tommy announced, "is the Wireless

Wedding." "Indeed it is," Tara affirmed. "We're marrying some real people." Tommy thrust. "We are indeed," Tara parried. "She's a teacher," Tommy pointed out, "he sells stuff." Tara capped this with: "Indeed he does. And he sells very good stuff." All this was punctuated by adverts for Diocalm, which now include frighteningly realistic toilet sound effects. Does this count as unintentional irony or clever product placement? I didn't get to the end. Presumably Sue and John tied the knot, and of course, we all wish them well. But you have to admit, the omens aren't looking good.

AFTER MR Smith's success in getting money out of the Treasury, this may not be the week to note how an awful lot can be achieved on very little. But let's give credit to the Almeida Theatre in Islington. I am told that today, its work will be seen by 5,900 people with performances of its productions at the Almeida itself, in Newcastle, at the Old Vic and in New York. Also today, it will be rehearsing the world premiere of the new Edward Albee play, starring Frances de la Tour and Alan Howard, and a new version of *Phedre* by poet laureate Ted Hughes, starring Diana Rigg. And all on a core grant of £228,000. Whatever the secret is, please tell it to the Royal Opera House.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

BY FIONA STURGES

	OVERVIEW	CRITICAL VIEW	ON VIEW	OUR VIEW
 THE OPERA CARMEN	Sir Colin Davis conducts the LSO in a concert performance of Georges Bizet's tragedy of sex and cigarettes. Kirov opera diva Olga Borodina plays the feisty gypsy girl with José Cura as her besotted plaything.	Edward Seckerson was sorely disappointed by the heroine. "There was nothing, but nothing, of the heat and dust about her... Somewhere between Siberia and Seville, Borodina had mislaid the character." But he felt more disposed towards Cura, remarking "this charisma is almost the equal of his hype... when Cura turns it on (and he did here, he really did), you can hear and see why he is in such demand." A	The production at the Barbican has now come to an end.	This concert performance passed up a perfect opportunity to highlight the opera's subtleties, being used instead as a vehicle for the starry singers. It was the dynamism and charisma of José Cura as Don José that rescued this otherwise pallid production. Perhaps it's most significant achievement was managing to sell out on World Cup Final night.
 THE MUSICAL OKLAHOMA!	Trevor Nunn's sparkling rediscovery of Rogers and Hammerstein's thigh-slapping classic takes over the Olivier for the summer. Designed by Anthony Ward and choreographed by Susan Stroman.	The critics were unanimous in their praise. "Seeing this 55-year-old show so pristine and proud is like gazing at a newly-restored old master, with the encrustations of the years stripped away to reveal its proper colours." raptured David Benedict, applauding the director for the "gut-busting energy, confidence and sheer full-blooded entertainment value of his production."	Booking at the National Theatre, Olivier, South Bank SE1 (0171 452 3000), to 3 October. Performances Mon-Sat 7.15pm. Matinees on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2pm.	Following weeks of puritanical muttering over the wisdom of staging such a commercial musical at the National, Trevor Nunn triumphs with this magnificent production of Rogers and Hammerstein's masterpiece. While Ward's designs lend tremendous atmosphere, Stroman's choreography shines. Get thee to the box office.
 THE FILM GODZILLA	From the makers of <i>Independence Day</i> , Japan's mutated lizard returns under the direction of Roland Emmerich. The green-eyed beast is taken on by Matthew Broderick, Jean Reno and Maria Pitillo.	"There is nothing very striking about this <i>Godzilla</i> ," laments Ryan Gilbey. "If it reminds you of anything as it climbs wearily from the city sewers, it will be a crabby old man struggling out of bed on a December morning. Even the scaly skin, bad gums and toenails are the same." "Less a blood-and-guts story than an exercise in cold, corporate huckstering," seethed <i>The Big Issue</i> . "A lowest common denominator	On general release. Cert PG. 139 minutes. Feast on <i>Fukuda's Godzilla: The Originals Films</i> (£4.99 each) at your nearest video shop.	Undoubtedly the most lacklustre <i>Godzilla</i> to date, the picture falls apart almost as quickly as the Chrysler Building. Emmerich's rendering lacks the tongue in cheek of <i>Independence Day</i> and all the special effects that Hollywood can bring to bear do not make up for a thin script. Bring back the rubber suits, all is forgiven.

Taste the future of ice cream

Next week is National Ice Cream Week. A cool idea, say Charles and Gina Hall, who were so upset with British ices that they set up Hill Station in Wiltshire to produce flavours using exotic tropical fruits and spices. By Charlotte Packer

Charles and Gina Hall, were American investment bankers, when they moved to England in 1993, after five years in Sao Paulo. They never imagined that their London postings would lead them away from the world of international finance and into ice cream production. But, three years on, in 1996, they founded Hill Station, an ice cream company specialising in gourmet ice creams flavoured with spices.

"After Brazil we were just looking forward to better weather and great British ice cream," says Gina. They were disappointed on both counts; though they still insist that Britain's on-again, off-again summer is preferable to the climate in Sao Paulo: "It really was terrible, always overcast and rainy and the city is just grey concrete," says Gina. And the ice cream? "Have you ever seen the cows in the tropics? They're not happy. Brazil was great for sorbets but not ice cream."

Having grown up in San Francisco where there was an abundance of good ice cream parlours, Sao Paulo came as a bitter blow to Gina. And the move to the UK five years later wasn't much better.

"We were really impressed by all the great restaurants in London, but we didn't find much of real interest in terms of ice cream; the top end of the market was just dominated by imports such as Häagen-Dazs. Of course we came across great farm stuff around the country but it was never available in London." It was clear to the Halls that there was a gap in the market between the luxury imports and the supermarkets' own-brand premium ranges.

Americans have a peculiarly passionate relationship with their ice cream and, on average, every American ploughs through around 22 litres a year. This makes the eight litres per person that we British consume seem pitiful. The reason for America's high ice cream consumption is a chicken-and-egg combination of two factors. First, real dairy ice cream – not to be confused with the tooth-crippingly sweet, bright yellow goo that fills our supermarkets – is cheap and widely available; and second, Americans regard ice cream as a food stuff not just a treat to be eaten at the beach. They eat it with anything and everything.

When Ben & Jerry first launched their wittily named ice creams over here, and talked earnestly about the importance of ice cream in their lives, it all seemed like a clever bit of PR banter. But the reality is that most Americans feel the same way. "You can go into any supermarket in the States," says Gina, "and you will find a choice of really good ice cream made by several local producers as well as the big players like

Ben & Jerry's and Häagen-Dazs." Added to the wide availability of what we would classify as premium brands, there are also over 20,000 ice cream parlours dedicated to churning out ever stranger flavours such as sweet corn and avocado. "We eat ice cream all the time in the States. There is no seasonality to it."

The Halls satisfied their ice cream cravings with tubs of Häagen-Dazs and Gina's own, homemade ice cream, and even began to joke about cracking the British ice cream market. "We were both virtually living on planes at that time," recalls Gina. "We knew that this had to stop, and we liked the idea of working for ourselves, but it wasn't clear what we could do."

A holiday in the Seychelles and a chance encounter with a scoop of cinnamon ice cream sealed their fate. "It was delicious, and I said to Charles 'We could do this'. When we got back I started looking into it, and I saw that there really was an opportunity." The biggest question facing the couple was not whether or not two finance people could make decent ice cream – Gina had been making her own ice cream for years – but how they would make a sufficiently different ice cream.

So, inspired by the cinnamon in the Seychelles and their own extensive travel in India and Brazil, they settled for tropical roots, fruits and spices: nutmeg, clove, cardamom, ginger, vanilla, coffee, chocolate and cinnamon. The name, Hill Station, is a reference to the regions in which these ingredients are found: hill stations such as Ootacamund in Southern India were established as bolt holes for escaping the oppressive heat of the lowlands during the summer. "It suits the ice cream," says Gina, "but lots of people now call us Mr and Mrs Hill."

Having experimented with various recipes at home, Gina quit her job and enrolled on a five-day course on ice cream manufacture at Reading University. This taught her the finer points of large-scale ice cream production and also gave her an insight into the received ideas about ice cream making in the UK. "My professor told me that we really had to have no less than 18 per cent sugar in our ice cream, anything lower would be unacceptable to the British palate," Gina didn't agree. "We knew that our ice cream would be a niche product, and that not everyone likes really sweet ice cream."

Having established what they wanted to make, and how to make it, the next problem was where. "We decided that for our product to work it had to sell in London – although now we are available nationwide – but we also had to be near good dairy farming." So Gina drew a large circle around the capital and the Halls searched within that area, finally settling for Caine in Wiltshire. Visas were the final hurdle, and once these came through, Charles gave up his job. In May 1996, they started work on transforming a tiny shed into a fully operational ice cream factory. "It was hard work," says Gina. "Because we also booked a stand at the BBC Good Food Show for that November to mass-test our ice cream."



Hill Station in Wiltshire: the Halls are big on ageing, something that large producers cannot always afford to bother with

John Laurence

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Appearing at show was invaluable, says Gina. "We were able to talk to people and we found that people loved the taste of our cin-

namon ice cream, for instance, but not the texture. In order to get the right strength of flavour we were adding so much ground cinnamon that it had made the ice cream slightly gritty."

The thing that sets Hill Station apart from many other ice cream companies is not simply the dedication of its founders, but the scale of the operation: although their seven ice creams are available nationwide, the company is just a team of six. Every part of the ice cream production is watched over

by Charles and Gina as if they were making a small batch of ice cream at home. Likewise the recipes were all devised by Gina at home, on a small scale: the Spiced Coffee started as an experiment with coffee and cloves which Gina tinkered with, eventually adding cinnamon and cardamom to create a delicious, aromatic and rich coffee ice cream.

The Halls are also big on ageing, something that the very large ice cream producers cannot always afford to bother with. Once the

spices have been added to the basic mix of eggs, milk, sugar and cream, the mixture is allowed to sit in chilled vats overnight to let the flavours develop. "Some stem ginger ice cream is vanilla ice cream with chunks of ginger added just before the mixture is frozen," explains Gina. "But our stem ginger pulp and ground ginger sit steeping in the mixture for 12 hours before being packaged."

So now that she has an ice cream company, does Gina still make ice cream in her kitchen? "Not at the

moment, but I've got lots of ideas for new flavours and I want to take some time out to develop them at home," she says patting a small Gaggie cream maker in the corner of her office. She won't say exactly what she is planning, but new flavours will remain true to the tropical theme, with a greater emphasis on fruit. "There is so much you can do with ice cream," she says. "It is like a blank canvas."

For stockists of Hill Station ice cream call 01249 816596

So where can I go for a Cherry Whim Wham?

Try a scoop or two of pure self-indulgence, now available at a parlour near you

Brynmor Ice Cream Parlour, High Jervaux Farm, Masham, North Yorkshire (01677 460377). Founded in 1984, with the introduction of milk quotas, Brynmor ice cream is made with milk and double cream from their own herd of Guernsey cows. The parlour is actually on the farm and seats around 100 people. The ice cream is also sold wholesale up and down the country and large cartons can be bought to take home. Frozen yoghurt was introduced to the range after the proprietors visited the US and new flavours are always appearing. A single cone of Black Cherry Whim Wham or Rhubarb Crumble costs 80p and there are another 28 flavours of ice cream, frozen yogurt and sorbet to lick on. Brynmor is open from 10am to 6pm daily, except for Christmas and Boxing Days.

George & Davis, 55, Little Clarendon Street, Oxford (01865 516652). Fast becoming an Oxford tradition, George & Davis was set up in 1992 by two American students who missed being able to buy really natural ice cream in the city. The walls are decorated with colourful cow motifs and the atmosphere is just as

bright. A single scoop of the most popular flavour, Dime Bar Crunch, costs £1.25. As well as ice creams and sorbets, G&D sell all kinds of bagels. If, by some strange fluke, you can't find the flavour you're after, you can have it made up as the next petition flavour – as long as you get 29 other people to sign up for it too. The café is open from 8am to midnight, seven days a week except for Christmas.

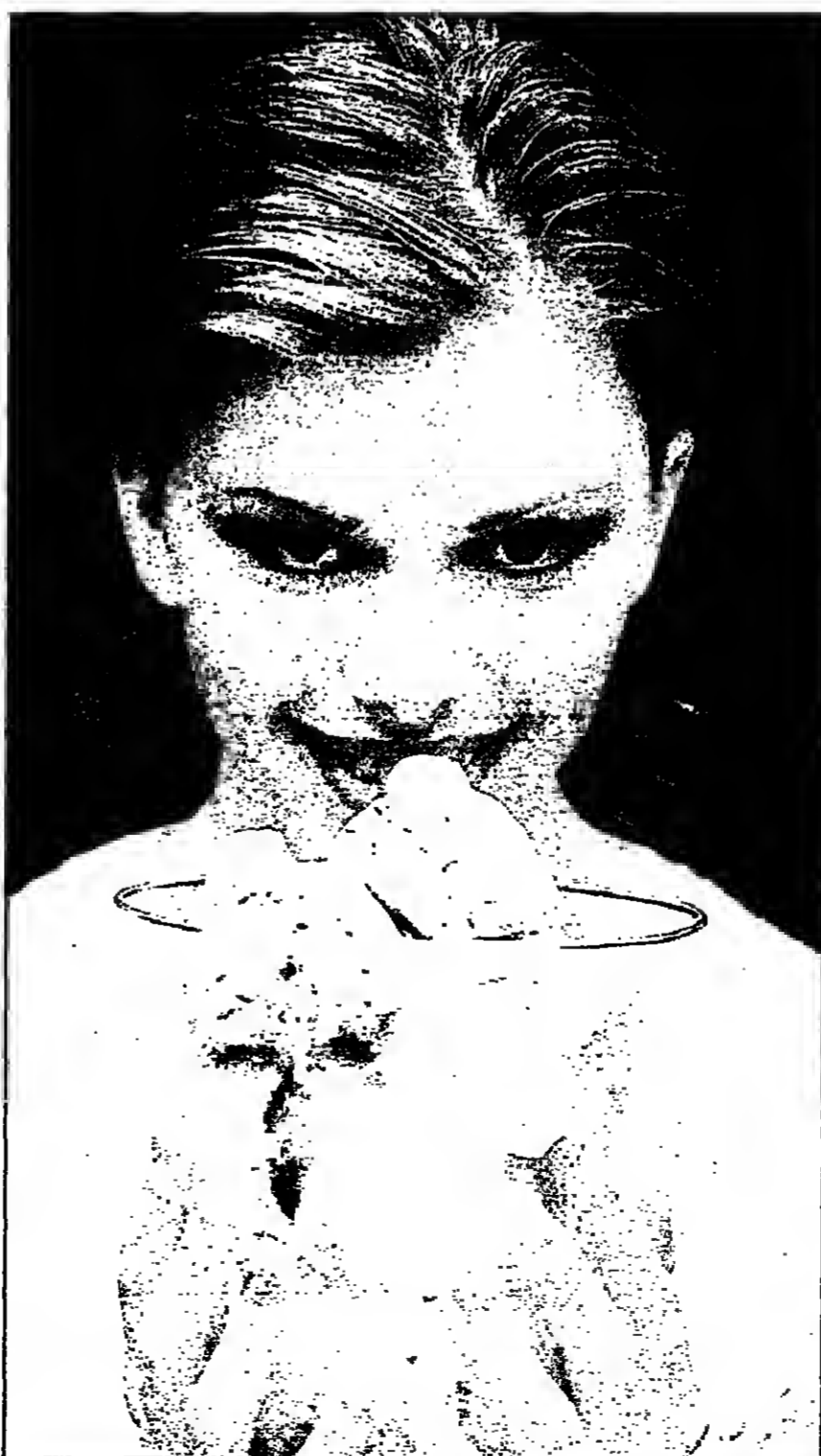
Joe's Ice Cream Parlour, 85 St Helen's Road, Swansea (01792 653880). The sweet, creamy, vanilla ice cream sold in Joe's is heaven – especially when plunged into a bowl full of chocolate chips ready to be nibbled off with each swipe of the tongue. In fact, vanilla is the only flavour you can buy, yet there are often queues right down the road – even in the winter.

Joe's was opened in 1922 by Joe Cascarini and is still in the same family. A single cone costs 80p and there are all kinds of sauces and toppings as well as sundaes. It is open from 11am to 9pm daily.

The Royal Cafe, 11 New Road, Ayr (01292 263058). This ice cream parlour has been going

for more than 80 years, with the third generation of the Mancini family now running the business. All 280 flavours of ice cream are manufactured on the premises and around 20 of those are on sale in the café at any one time. The latest flavour is Apple Pie but the best thing to try is an Ice Cream Toastie. A single cone of Caramel Pecan Swirl costs 80p and for £1 you can buy a broche hun, stuffed with any flavour of ice cream, and toasted for 30 seconds in a special machine to produce a kind of instant Baked Alaska. Opening hours are 9.30am to 11pm, seven days a week.

Marine Ices, 8 Haverstock Hill, London (0171 482 9000). In 1947, Gaetano Mansi's business became Marine Ices, with the café built to resemble a ship. Though no longer so nautical in decor, the quality of the ice cream remains high and Marine Ices now supplies around 1,500 restaurants with ice cream. Fresh fruit water ices are its speciality and a single cone costs £1.10. Fans of the classic flavours won't be disappointed, with good old pistachio, tutti frutti and chocolate appearing on the large menu. Opening hours are 10.30am to 10.30pm every day.



Who makes the flavours to die for?

Nick and Joan Hardingham have been growing fruit at Alder Carr Farm since 1981 and an exceptionally good raspberry crop eight years ago precipitated the move into ice cream. Nick's mother found a recipe for ice cream which simply involved whipped cream, sugar and fruit and the rest, as they say, is history. Raspberry remains one of their best-sellers but the range now includes 15 different flavours and the number is rising. Elderflower, Gooseberry and Summer Pudding are delicious. Price: £3.56 for 500g Alder Carr Farm Shop, Creeting St. Mary, Suffolk IP6 8LX (01479 720 820).

Cruckmoor Farm was initially just another family-run dairy farm but some years ago it extended into making ice cream with an old-fashioned Italian machine.

The rich vanilla ice cream contains ground vanilla which gives an unusual depth of flavour, and the Caramel Fudge ice cream is filled with chunks of locally made fudge. Price: £12 for four litres. **Dalesman Ice Cream**, Cruckmoor Farm, Pross Green, Shropshire (01948 840217).

Colin English and his wife specialise in bespoke ice creams for hotels and restaurants.

They manage to make delicious ice cream from the most unlikely ingredients: this week Colin ran up a batch of Lancashire cheese ice cream, ordered by a local hotel to

accompany its apple crumble.

The 100-plus ice creams in its list are made up to order, they never hold any stock. Price: £3 plus VAT for 750g or £8.10 plus VAT for two litres. **English Ice Cream**, Staveley, Cumbria (01539 821 562).

The Finlay family's dairy herd of Ayrshires provides the milk for their creamy ice cream.

The eight flavours include Sticky Toffee which contains toffee chips and thick streaks of toffee made with boiled condensed milk. Other popular flavours are Banoffi with real banana, Whisky, Honey, Oatmeal and Elderflower frozen yoghurt.

From this week Cream O'Galloway products are available in Harrods, price: £2.99 for 500ml. **Cream O'Galloway**, Linton Farm, Gatehouse of Fleet, Dumfries & Galloway, DG7 2DR (01557 814040).

When Rocombe Farm organic dairy sprouted an ice cream shop 11 years ago it was the realisation of a childhood dream for co-owner Suzanne Redstone. The produce around 15 ice creams, four frozen yoghurts and five sorbets all of which are fully organic, and five semi-organic ice creams.

Try **Chocolate with Balls** (vanilla ice cream with chocolate-covered honeycomb balls) and **Crunchies and Cream**.

Price: £3.50 and £3.85 for 500ml. **Rocombe Farm**, Castle Circus, Torquay, Devon (01626 834 545).

Floor show

Dressing your boards has never been more fashionable. From hand-tufted moquettes to minimalist mats, David Rowley guides you through the new collector's item - the rug

The modern-looking, deep-pile rug is one of the most versatile home furnishings you can buy. It can be tailored to match your colour scheme. It can be a work of art, yet it can also be a cure for bad acoustics and of wear improves its looks and, if a limited edition, it should appreciate in value too. Not bad for a £1,000-£3,000 investment.

Not just utilitarian, deep-pile rugs are also in vogue for interiors. They are a substitute for the out-of-favour and asthma-associated fitted carpets. They can also provide a relief from over-spacious wooden floors - especially in warehouse loft conversions where the bold swathes of colour on modern rugs are a perfect complement to the minimalist look.

Oddly, London and not Persia is the origin of these rugs. Britain's decline in manufacturing has brought some benefits. On graduating, former art students often find there simply aren't jobs for them, so they become self-employed instead. Gravitating towards London for safety in numbers, and for the greater possibilities of selling their work, the young designers free of corporate artistic restraint, are heading London's current pre-eminence in interiors.

Big daddy of all the rug-makers is the internationally renowned Christopher Farr, who opened his Chalk Farm outlet 10 years ago. His links to the area go back to 1968 when, at the nearby hippy mecca, the Roundhouse, he saw Jim Morrison and the Doors perform. Nowadays it is rock stars who seek him out.

Large in size and price, Farr is quite honest about who can afford his rugs. "We get the rock stars in after their first flush," he casually informs, "and people with two homes, who will give their country house a more traditional look, while giving the London flat a more modern look." The Farr rug, in case you are wondering, goes in the London flat.

Farr's hippy background shows through in his designs which mix Mark Rothko-like colour swathes with the shapes of Inca stonework at Machu Picchu in Peru. The designs are done in London and then the rugs are hand knotted, with luxurious deep-pile pure wool - and added mohair for softness - in Turkey. An average-sized (2m x 2m) Farr rug costs £2,300 going up to £6,200 for a 3.6m x 2.75m rug and each design is limited to around 10 to 15 editions.

More accessible in price are the tufted-wool rugs of newer designers such as Collins and Little.

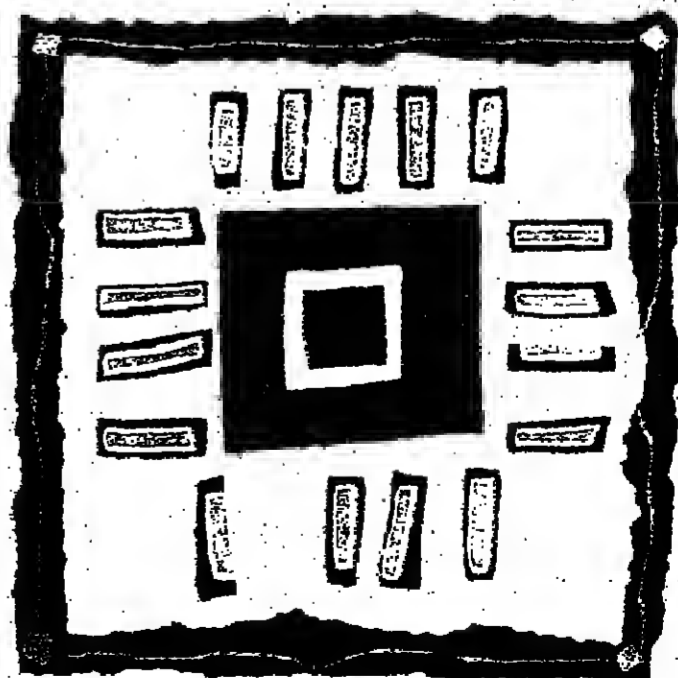
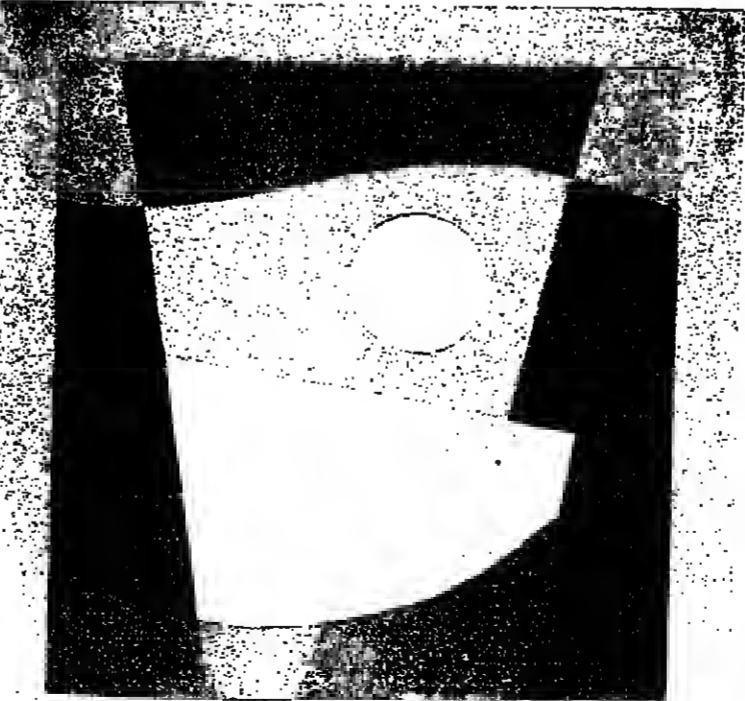
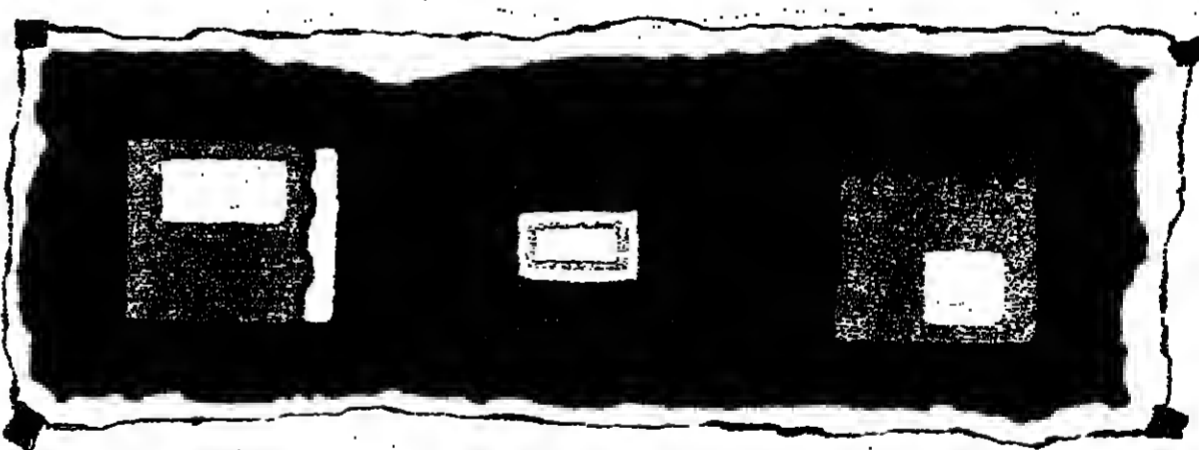
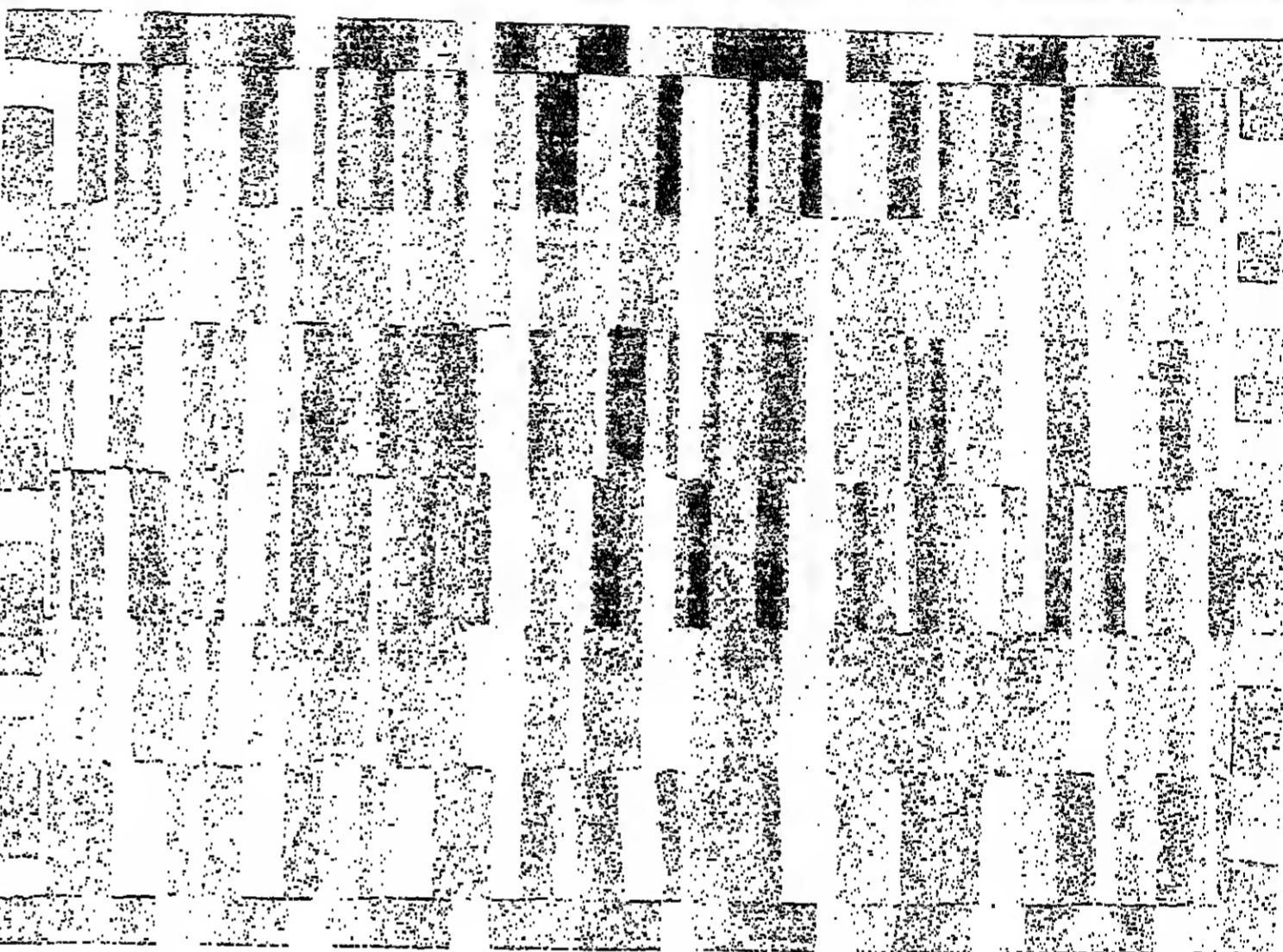
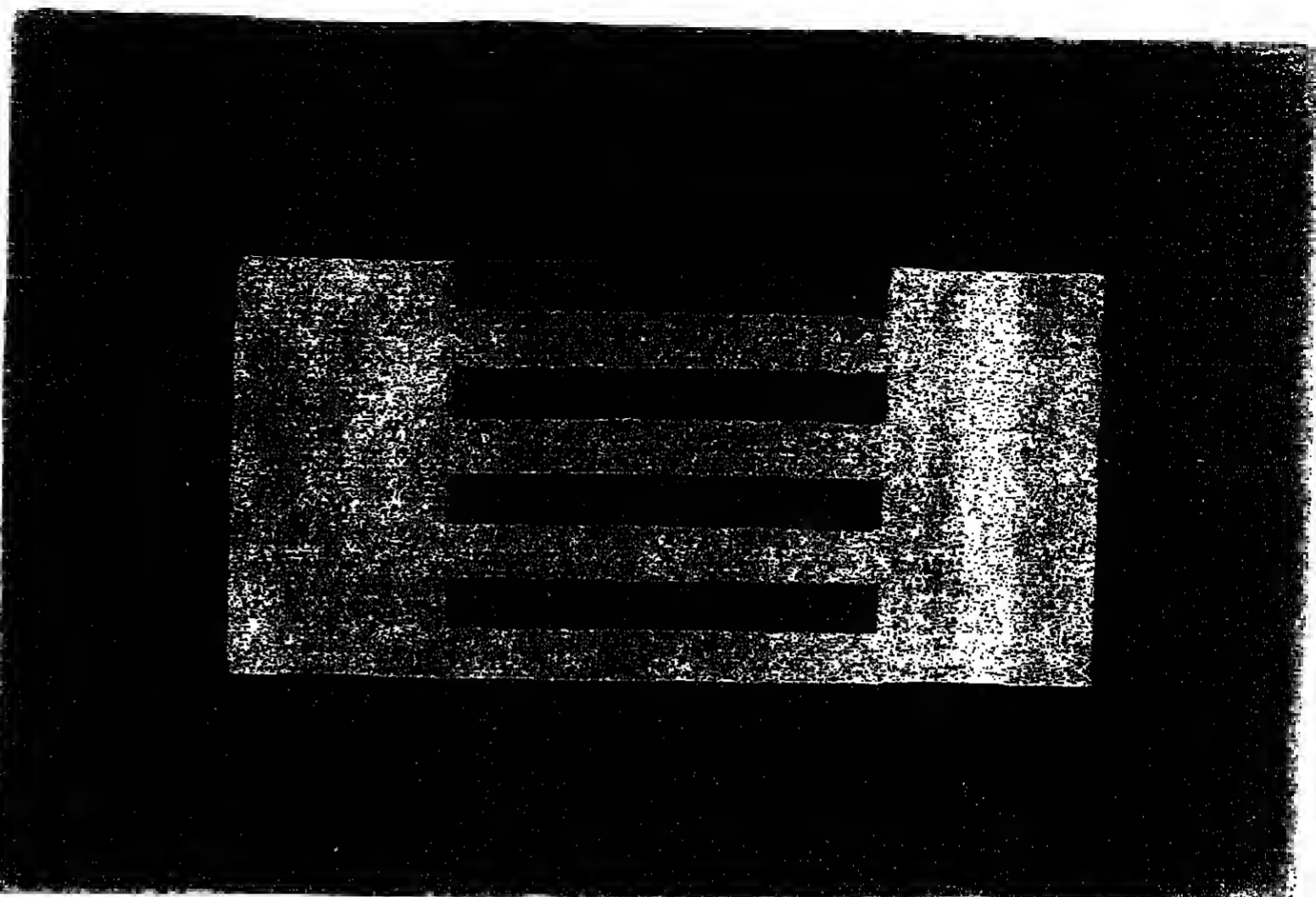
Based in the Oxo Tower next to the Thames, their designs match the art deco styling of this building. The look makes a surprising change from the omnipresent intricate Persian rug. "Our designs are not fussy or over decorative, which was a look that was missing in the carpet market," says co-designer Teresa Collins, who acknowledges a link with minimalism. "People are buying fewer items and having more things they really want. They also like the idea that they can put down a rug that is special to them. All of our rugs can be commissioned in colours that will suit their interior."

Sideline as colour consultants, Teresa Collins and Jenni Little are well qualified to advise on matching colours, though their ready-made rugs already come in tempting colour combinations. Pale pastel colours are used for their St Ives-inspired seaside collages. And not to be missed are their extrovert runners with African-style shapes picked out in purple, orange and pink. Prices range from £300 for a runner to £1,300 for a large room-filling rug.

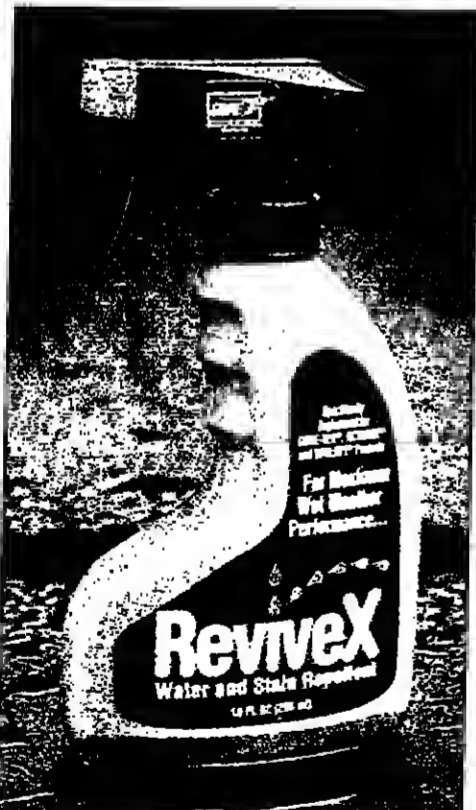
Offering a less structured look, Tracy Hillier is one of the youngest rug-makers around. A hand-tufted Tracy Hillier runner will cost from £661, going up to £1,600 for a living-room sized 1.8m x 2.5m rug. Tracy works along abstract expressionist lines, drawing her designs from nature. "At the moment I'm into fish, so I've been visiting loads of aquariums. Nature has some of the best colour combinations and textures." Art theory aside, some of Hillier's ideas for her most popular work, "Three squares in a rectangle" and "Squares in a square", came from less lofty sources. "I always do these doodles when I'm on the telephone and I liked those particular doodles so much I ended up using them."

Christopher Farr is at 115 Regents Park Road, London, NW1 6UR (0171-916 7690) and also at 212 Westbourne Grove, London, W11. Collins and Little is at Unit 2.10, Oxo Tower Wharf, Bargehouse Street, South Bank, SE1 (0171-928 9022). It is often best to phone before visiting. Tracy Hillier is at 2nd floor studios, 24-28 Hatton Wall, London EC1 (0171-242 6344) and can be visited by appointment only. A brochure of her work is available.

A variety of British rug-makers will show their work on 27 September at the 100% Design show, Earl's Court, London. Tickets cost £8 in advance and the box-office, which opens on Monday, is on 0171-381 2993.



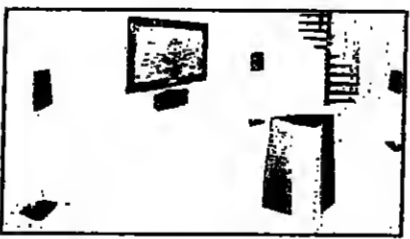
From top: 'prunelle' by Little and Collins; 'Be-Bop' by Little and Collins; '3 Squares in a Rectangle' by Tracy Hillier. Bottom right: 'Squares in a Square' by Tracy Hillier. Bottom left: 'Pastorale' by Little and Collins



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MAD THING



People with small homes should start saving now for the Wytus (TM) television, launched in September by Thomson Multimedia (0181-344 4413 for more details). At £11,500 it is only 9.6cm wide - the thinnest plasma screen ever built.

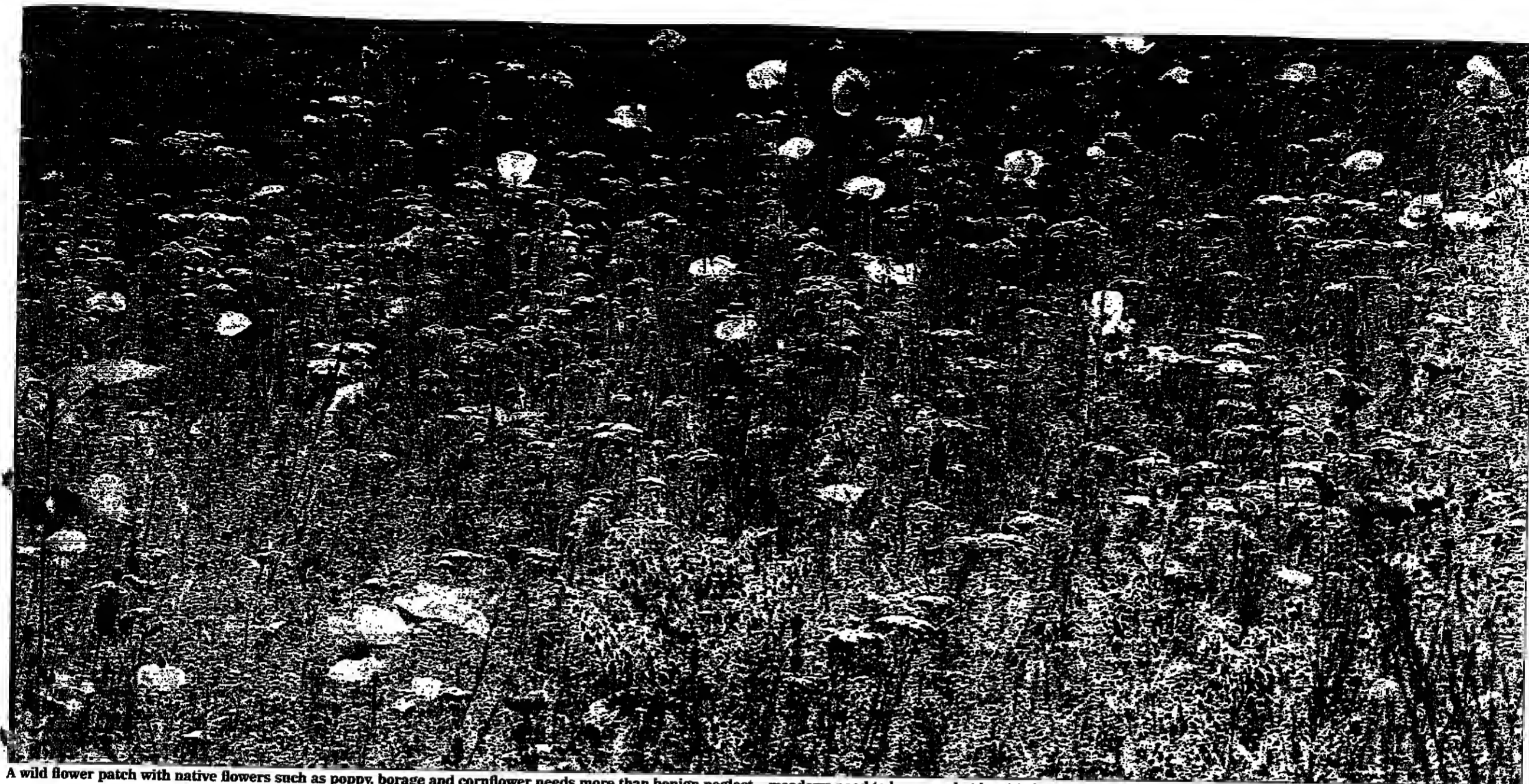
SHOP TALK



If you've dreamed of adventures on the high seas then a trip to Cornwall may be just the thing for you. Tall Ships Playframes is a small Cornish-based company which makes anything from pirate boats to tree houses. Set up by ex-naval officer Michael Purser, the handmade wooden playframes come in easily assembled kits and are made of chestnut, oak and fir. Designed to last for generations, they're safe, fun and suitable for kids of all ages. Prices range from £299 for a basic climbing frame in softwood to £2,000 for a jungle bridge set in hardwood or £10,000 for a tree house.

Tall Ships Playframes, Unit 1, Highfield Industrial Estate, Camelford, Cornwall, PL32 9RA (01840 212022)

TIM STEIN



A wild flower patch with native flowers such as poppy, borage and cornflower needs more than benign neglect - meadows need to be mowed at least twice a year

Gary Rogers/GPL

Tangle of wild flowers

Ursula Buchan went to mow her meadow - home to field mice, hedgehogs and ringlet butterflies

It is a hard-hearted soul indeed whose withers remain unwrung at the thought of how quickly native flowers, and the wildlife that depends upon them, are disappearing. My withers certainly feel as though they have been through the mangle. Which is why I decided, this year, to do my bit by leaving about an acre of grassland in the far reaches of our garden unmown, throughout the spring and early summer. Although my motives were of the purest, I cannot categorically deny that it was a relief not to have to spend so much time on the ride-mower. There is nothing like necessity to engender Messianic conviction.

I have not made a proper "wild flower meadow", you understand. Or not in the accepted sense of the word. In "gardening for wildlife" books, you are advised to start from scratch, having first removed all vegetation and diminished the soil's fertility, and then you sow, or plant, commercially available native flowers and grasses. But that is really

only practicable on a small scale. The option I took was to encourage, by a sensible regime of benign neglect, the prosperity of well-behaved wild flowers and grasses, at the expense of the over-exuberant ones we call weeds. In the process, I discovered that a meadow on your doorstep is a lovely thing in May and June. Flowers I have never seen there before (purple self-heal, gleaming golden buttercups, pink annual dove's-foot geranium, white campion and ribwort plantain, together with 15 or so species of flowering grasses - meadow foxtail, crested dog's-tail, fescues, soft brome), impressed me by their charm and congruity. When I looked at what had been achieved, simply by leaving the mower in the garage, I was moved by the power and patience of these plants. The seed and crows had been there in

the ground all along, waiting for the good times to roll. Everyone knows that such a "meadow" must be managed, not left entirely to its own devices. It requires to be cut only once, in July when the spring flowers have set seed, and again in September or early October, but that cutting is not straightforward. My meadow was too tough an assignment for a ride-on mower and too large an area for a strimmer to tackle. Which is why I recently found myself standing contemplating a hired, motorised scythe in the company of Mick, who helps in the garden for a few hours every fortnight. The idea was that he would guide the scythe along, being a chap, and I would walk alongside, using a long-handled metal hay rake; my job was to clear away the long grasses from the cruel scissor blades at the front of

the machine, when they threatened to clog them. So wet has been the summer, and so fertile our clay soil, that the waving grasses were, in places, four feet tall. Moreover, although I had done my best all season to spot-treat the docks and thistles with glyphosate herbicide, I could not stanch the flow of bindweed without killing the grasses as well, and had been too tolerant of the thick-stemmed hogweed and cow parsley. When we discovered, almost immediately, that the scythe blades were as blunt as a stage York-shireman, I knew it was not going to be plain scything. All the livelong afternoon and into the evening we toiled. The scythe cut through the grasses, which fell sideways in slow motion with a whispering swish. It struck an atavistic chord, as if somehow the hay-

I thought, too, of the hedgehog which my son and I had watched in the twilight, entranced, as it moved through the long grass like a tiger through the savannah; of the part-ridges and pheasants that I regularly disturb there; of the kestrel that hovers above; and of the gatekeeper meadow brown and ringlet butterflies that kept us wary company as we worked. We worried out loud about all the animals which the great swaths of grass had sheltered and succoured. We saw some of them: not the hedgehog, but many field mice, scurrying into the fallen grass for safety, and a number of loads that leapt indignantly out of the way. ("The toad beneath the harrow knows exactly where each tooth-point goes.") We consoled ourselves that the engine was so noisy, and the machine so slow, that casualties must have been few. And we purposely left an expanse of nettles and grasses uncut, both as a mammal sanctuary and to leave undisturbed the larvae of red admiral, small

tortoiseshell and peacock butterflies. There will be no cutting the nettles down until the autumn. The job is not over yet. The grasses may lie drying in the sun and shedding their seed, but they must be removed eventually or they will gradually release their nutrients back into the soil. And, as we know, wild flowers are best served if grasses are not so vigorous as to crowd them out. So, one day soon I will rake up the fallen swaths and put them into a tidy heap, adding Bio-tal Compost Maker for Grass to help degrade them quickly into usable compost. As for the meadow, now raggedly shorn, it will be mown once more in the early autumn. This will be much easier than before, because we will be able to use the ride-on mower. Where the soil is poorest, and the grasses least vigorous, I shall plant cowslips, primroses and small scabious, and, where toughies are required, ox-eye daisies, knapweeds and meadow cranesbill. And as with our day of hay-making, it will be time well spent.

WEEKEND WORK

IT HAS been a staggering season for growth, but with some shrubs, such as hydrangeas, growth has been so lush that they flag as soon as the sun falls on them. They may need their reservoirs topping up. Water in the evening, never when the sun is falling directly on to the leaves. Young brassica plants need watering in well, too, when they are transplanted. Water them in their holes like leeks before stamping the ground firm round their stems.

■ The most efficient way to water single important plants is through a pot or length of drainpipe sunk into the ground close to the main stem of the plant. By watering direct into the pipe or pot, you deliver straight to the roots and less water is lost through evaporation.

■ I use a plastic funnel to water shallow troughs and alpine pans. The water, which seeps through the bottom of the funnel, is taken up more slowly and comprehensively than if you splash over the whole surface with a watering-can. ■ Bearded iris should be split up and replanted now. Break up old rhizomes, discard the pieces with no leaves and replant the new sections, cutting down each fan of leaves to about six inches. Plant shallowly so the top of the rhizome is above the ground and can

be baked by the sun. ■ Regular dead-heading is important if annuals are to continue making a show through August. Argemone and osteospermums also respond well to regular winnowing. Trace the stems back to their base or to the point where they have a fresh bud, before cutting. ■ Mildew has started to become unsightly. I have been vastly disappointed by the performance of some much-trumpeted blue scabious I planted this spring. From the start, they have suffered grossly from mildew. Acanthus also looks bad. Drench plants with a fungicide such as Bealate.

CUTTINGS

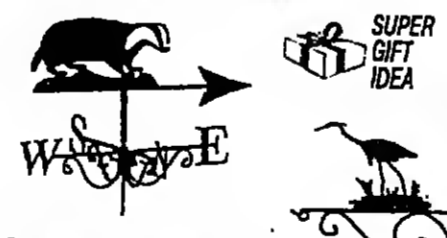
THE FACT that English native yew contained a drug (taxol) that could cure cancer, was recently hailed as a major breakthrough by the German pharmaceutical company that processes it. But yew is only one of thousands of plants that, in the days before chemists' shops, were widely used as cures. People used plants to tell fortunes, too, and incorporated them into spells and love potions. In Wales girls tossed cowslip balls from hand to hand chanting, "Fisty, tosty, tell me true, who shall I be married to?" You then sang out the names of all the boys you fancied. If the ball dropped, your star would be

forever hitched to the last name you had called. Like many other divining tricks, this one was pleasantly open to manipulation. Margaret Baker explains many such convictions in *The Folklore of Plants* (Shire Publications, £4.99). Ferns of all kinds gathered round them an extraordinary number of beliefs. "Sir," wrote the Earl of Pembroke to the Sheriff of Staffordshire in 1636, "His Majesty taking notice of an opinion entertained in Staffordshire that the burning of Ferne doth draw down rain and being desirous that the country and himself may enjoy fair weather as long as he remains in those

parts, His Majesty hath commanded me to write unto you, to cause all burning of Ferne to be forborne, until His Majesty be passed the county." ART IN Action, a gathering of artists and craftsmen who design work especially suited for gardens, opened earlier this week and continues today and tomorrow. It is held in the grounds of Waterperry House, Waterperry, near Wheatley, Oxfordshire, and is open 10.30am-5.30pm, admission £9. It is a good place to pick up work from an international band of potters and ceramists - "abroad" without the travel. ANNA PAVORD

GARDENING

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The tale of a garden bully

When a favoured plant falls victim to disease, it has to go. The next task? To replace it with something better. By Anna Pavord

It was an eccentric time to get rid of the acanthus, just as it was coming up into flower. But a couple of years ago, the plant, which I had always thought to be bomb-proof, got a bad attack of mildew. I drenched it with fungicide, cut down the worst-affected leaves and hoped for the best. Unfortunately, each season since, it has been similarly afflicted.

Mildew is a problem that is better prevented than cured, but to prevent it, you have to spray regularly at two-week intervals, before you even see the first ghastly grey mould spreading over the leaves. It is stealthier than us. It is also more persistent. These are the kind of organisms that were around at the beginning of the world. They will still be around at the end, too. In comparison with their tenacity, our tenure is only an insignificant blip.

The acanthus in question was *A. spinosus*, the one with very dark, deeply cut leaves, rather than *A. mollis* which has big, bright green, cabbagey leaves. Mine was at least four feet high and about six feet across. Covered in mildew, this was an eyesore you could not help seeing. And it grew in the study border, which I see as much from inside as from outside in the garden. The study window looks directly out on to it. However much I tried to concentrate on the rodgersias, or the dark red, velvety flowers of the rose 'Souvenir du Dr Jamain', the acanthus loomed accusingly behind.

Why, after being written up everywhere as "trouble free", did the acanthus suddenly let me down so spectacularly? I suspect the mildew crept in during one of our recent hot dry summers. Dry soils encourage mildew, which then gallops away in the still, damp atmosphere you create round the foliage of the plant when you water in droughts.

An armoury of fungicides such as carbendazim, mancozeb and sulphur is available to gardeners, but, as rose fanciers know to their cost, mildews bob and weave all the time, constantly evolving new strains that are resistant to known medicines. That is why gardeners have to keep changing the fungicides they use, to try to take the mildew by surprise. But there is no doubt that once the spores have settled on a plant such as acanthus, they are very difficult to shift.

So I went the spade and out came the plant. It was a huge relief. I had, anyway, been worrying that

its bullish growth was intimidating the new plants behind: a fine strain of the species *dahlia D. coccinea* with chalky red flowers and *Cornus irridifolia*, whose leaves are just unrolling now. Full grown, both are taller than the acanthus, but because they are both late starting into growth, the acanthus was always there with its fists up as they struggled to get going.

I had also let the acanthus get too big for the size of the border, which fills a corner made by two arms of the house. It dominated it, but not with grace. And its domineering nature thwarted any plant that tried to enter into a relationship with it. Auricula-eyed sweet williams cowered in front of it, old-fashioned double red peonies quailed alongside. I can't think now why it took me so long to get rid of the brute.

The border faces south and west, with stone walls making the corner behind. The backdrop is a muddle of the pale pink climbing rose 'New Dawn' smothered with clematis, deep magenta 'Ernest Markham' followed by the greyish-blue 'Prince Charles'. Sweet-smelling evergreen trachelospermum and myrtle pick up from the rose.

When the acanthus had gone, there was a satisfyingly large space waiting to be filled. But what with? The ground there is quite heavy and damp, despite the border's sunny aspect. I had never thought much about colour plans, but the keynote was set by the old peonies. Deep red, deep blue, purple, magenta, pink, cream and buff predominate now.

There is a lot of leaf there, too: plumes of royal fern that grow in a row under the study window, rough hands of rodgersia, with buff flowers; the great, crinkled cabbage leaves of crabe tucked away in the corner, scimitar-shaped fans of crinum, whose trumpet flowers give a boost to the border in late summer; fronds of the big *Geranium palmatum* and the paddle-shaped leaves of the canna.

I expect I was thinking leaf rather than flower as I cruised round one of my favourite nurseries (RD Plants, near Axminster in Devon). Anyway, I came home with a purple-leaved bugbane, a beautiful thing that will grow up to four feet tall, with leaves elegantly lobed and cut. It flowers in late autumn, long, thin creamy spikes, and that's when the border needs most help.

Purple-bronze, too is the sedum 'Lynda et Rodney', named by a French grower after the owners of RD Plants. It is irresistible, one of the tall-growing kinds, similar to the

purple form of *Sedum telephium*. That one is too dark and beefy for my taste, but, like bugbanes, the sedums are useful performers at a time when most of the garden is winding down.

With those, towards the back of the new space, is a grass, *Pennisetum macrourum*, a clumping, evergreen grass that has flower spikelets like caterpillars hanging off the end of its stems in autumn. They start pale creamy-green and turn purple and brown as they age. These three, with a couple of purple cone flowers (*Echinacea purpurea*), make up what I hope will be the permanent planting on the site.

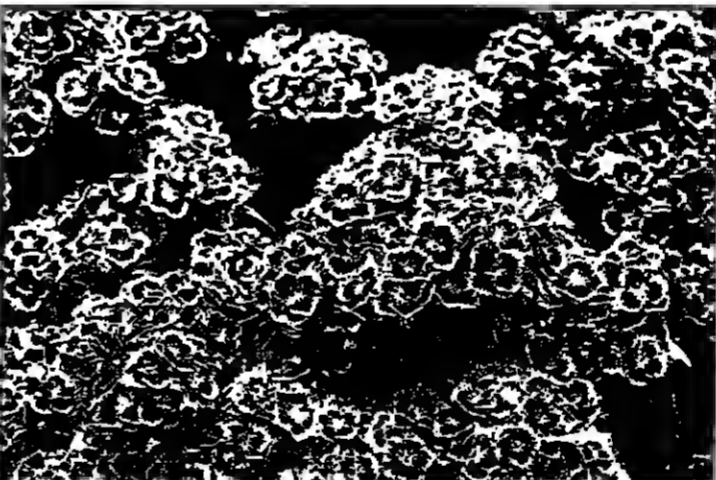
The rest may stay impermanent. For this season, I've joined up the clumps of sweet williams along the front of the border with groups of the dark-flowered snapdragon 'Purple King' (Thompson & Morgan, £1.69). I hate the dwarf varieties, but this grows to about 18 inches, a sensible height.

In some parts of our garden, snapdragons hang on as perennials and come into flower much earlier than plants raised from seed. Cut off the main spike after it has flowered, and you get a second crop of flowers carried on short side stems.

Cerinth is another useful plant to keep in reserve as a filler. I had three, still in the pots they were sown this spring, and they too have helped to bulk up the new planting in the study border. I've also used some small-flowered but very weather resistant petunias. Next year, I may try 'Purple Wave' petunias instead. They are phenomenal spreaders and flowerers, by far the best thing I have ever grown hanging out of the manger in the courtyard. But they would be good on the flat, too.

Next year, though, I may be fighting the acanthus again. It is best propagated by root cuttings and I have a horrible feeling that each little bit of chopped-up root left underground (there are bound to be some, however carefully you dig) will think it is supposed to procreate. I'll be waiting with the weedkiller.

RD Plants (Rodney Davey and Lynda Windsor) are at Homelea Farm, Tytherleigh, Axminster, Devon EX13 7BG. Open 9am-1pm and 2pm-5pm Mon-Fri and most weekends. I have never found them closed, but, if making a special journey, call first (8.30-9.30am) on 01480 220206. They keep a wide range of unusual herbaceous plants.



Acanthus, top, is generally thought to be a trouble-free plant, but if it does succumb to disease it must be removed. What to put in its place? Try Sweet William, above left, or snapdragons, right

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Who's ruffling the feathers of Scotland?



In Scotland predation by hen harriers has been so high that some commercial grouse moors have become unviable

Ardea

It's not just a row about birds, it's a debate about independence. By Duff Hart-Davis

On Tuesday, leaders of the 4,000-strong Scottish Landowners' Federation (SLF) made one of their rare forays to London and held a press conference to air some of their worries about the future. Their immediate target for attack was the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), at which they fired a broadside over the vexatious issue of grouse and raptors; but it was clear that their minds were dwelling on the far greater battles they may have to fight if Scotland becomes an independent nation. As their convenor, Andrew Dingwall-Fordyce, put it: "This Scottish Parliament on the horizon brings us many fresh challenges and opportunities".

The RSPB has incurred the landowners' wrath by failing to take a clear stand on grouse-shooting, which makes a vital contribution to the Scottish rural economy. The Langholm report, published last November after five years' research on moors in Dumfriesshire, concluded that, in the study area, predation by hen harriers was so high as to make commercial grouse shooting unviable. The question posed by the report was, and remains: what should be done when the population of protected hawks becomes excessive?

The RSPB co-operated in the research project, and then joined the Moorland Working Group appointed to find ways forward; but so far the society has failed to make clear its position on shooting and predator control.

Twice this year, in March and April, the SLF called on the RSPB in public to recognise the beneficial role that gamekeepers play in the countryside, but twice there was no response.

Now the landowners' irritation has been increased by the fact that the RSPB itself is buying Gellies.

The RSPB declined to issue any statement in reply, merely telling individual inquirers that it disagreed profoundly with most of what the landowners are saying. Meanwhile, several deeper worries cloud the horizon, and there is much apprehension that a future nationalist government will try to get its own back on the proprietors of sporting estates, mainly out of social and political spite, rather than for any sound economic reasons.

Landowners have just about come to terms with the Access Concordat, worked out in 1994, which

One typical West Highland estate I know extends to 12,500 acres, but the ground is so barren that it supports only one full-time job - that of the deerstalker/gamekeeper. For the past three years, freedom from the burden of rates has enabled the owner to take on another man for the deer-culling season, from August to January, and to employ a third on forestry and conservation tasks during the summer.

The laird agrees that, in the sum of things, such numbers seem insignificant. Yet at heather-roots level they are all-important. By putting two more men to work on the hill, he has increased his tiny village's sense of involvement with the land that surrounds it.

A far more sinister threat is that of land reform, and the possibility that absentee or foreign owners may somehow be dispossessed of their holdings. Already estate agents have seen an increase in sales of houses over the border in Northumberland, where businessmen are buying properties within commuting distance of Edinburgh, in expectation of higher Scottish taxes if independence comes. So far prices of sporting estates are holding up, but the SLF predicts that a declaration of independence will precipitate a large-scale exodus.

One man who takes a calmer view is Paul van Vlissingen, the

Dutch businessman and conservationist who owns and manages Letterewe, a magnificent 100,000-acre deer forest in Wester Ross. For the past 20 years he has championed the idea of wilderness; and he has spent fortunes maintaining a magnificently desolate expanse of heather, rock and water in its pristine state.

"I don't fear the long-term future at all," he declares, "because the Scots are sensible people, and when they get down to it they will see what the real problems of the countryside are. What I do fear is the interim period, when everyone's trying to score political points, and a tremendous number of hot-air balloons full of rhetoric are being sent up."

As an instance, he cites a recent pamphlet put out by the Scottish Nationalist Party, which claimed that no foreigners are allowed to own land in Holland.

This, as he well knows, is nonsense - although whether the falsehood was born of ignorance or malice, he cannot tell. But he does point out with some force that if people like himself were made to feel unwelcome, they might very well withdraw their industrial and commercial investments, as well as their persons, which would have the effect of leaving Scotland a great deal poorer.

Bottoms up for the pick of the crop

Whatever happened to the British summer rite of PYO, asks Sally Williams

ALONG WITH cricket on the green, a familiar rural sight in summertime is a field of bottoms pointing skywards as people pick fruit and vegetables.

Ever since the Sixties people have picked their own. It started in America with You Pick, which sounds faintly disgusting. Here the name changed, freezers boomed and PYO took off.

On summer weekends, especially those around Wimbledon fortnight, sackfuls of strawberries and raspberries at knock-down prices were carried away from Britain's 1,500 PYO farms.

In recent years, though, its popularity has diminished. "It's about two thirds what it was in the Sixties and Seventies," says Gareth Jones, consultant to the Farm Retail Association.

"Jam making has declined. More people live on their own: lifestyles have changed."

Rachel Moseley, an adviser to the association, says: "I'm in my twenties and live on my own. I wouldn't go and pick loads of fruit because I don't have anywhere to put it."

According to a recent survey, we are eating more fruit than ever but still get through just over one apple a day each. And that despite repeated advice to eat at least five portions of vegetables or fruit a day.

So what hope is there to pick-your-own, particularly when our favourite fruit is the banana?

A group of overseas agriculture students at Reading University recently questioned shoppers at their local Tesco. They asked: "Are you aware of each other?" was published last week.

One of them, Birjette Keijer, says: "Thirteen people out of the 102 shoppers interviewed didn't know about PYO at all."

Birjette is from Holland, where the only thing you can pick yourself is asparagus; PYO is peculiar to Britain and America.

"Another 42 people had heard of PYO but never did it." The problem, she concludes, is that people associate the idea only with strawberries. "They are not aware of what PYO has to offer these days."

At Garston Farm, near Esher, in Surrey, you can pick strawberries, cherries, blackcurrants, tay berries, beetroot, mange tout, marrowns and cauliflower. There is also a garden centre, restaurant, shop, pony rides and a giant gateaux competition.

Customer Clare Turner, a nursery school teacher from London, thinks PYO can be

very educational. "You ask city children where strawberries and carrots come from and they say Sainsburys or Tesco."

"I brought some children here two months ago and they're still talking about it. They were very worried by all the mud, though. They kept on asking, 'Is this OK to eat? It's really dirty'."

It is great, she says, for children to go out and gather food themselves rather than having it handed to them. "But," she warns, "don't let them get carried away." She ended up with a bill for £17.

So, is the appeal of PYO tied up with something primordial - a hunter-gatherer instinct, perhaps?

George, a company director in his fifties, thinks so. I found him in the broad-bean patch. "I don't like broad beans," he said, expertly cutting them off with a small kitchen knife. He filled three carrier bags, then headed off to the gooseberries.

But Gareth Jones points out that not every PYO farm is like Garston. "There are plenty of basic farms where you pick, weigh, pay and go. However, if properly run, they are still worth a visit."

"Another reason why PYO declined, he says, is that some farmers would just plant a few acres of strawberries and expect it to be successful."

"You need an infrastructure: access, parking, staff, scales, an advertising campaign."

Garston farm has up to 13 staff on hand to help 100,000 visitors a year pick 60-odd tons of strawberries. They also tend to the 30 crops.

Peter Thompson, the public relations manager, says: "We try and keep our fields immaculately clean. That's why organic PYO wouldn't work: people wouldn't appreciate the weedy mess or, as our yield would halve, the higher prices."

Staff also have to keep an eye on the cherries. "Cherries fresh off the tree are so delicious people seem to have real problems putting them in the punnet," he sighs.

Despite such losses, PYO is still very profitable. "The customers harvest for us. And we don't have transport or distribution costs."

In America, picking-your-own is booming once more. Farms have introduced more variety: the season extends to pumpkins and Christmas trees and it's sold as a fun, family day out.

As Birjette Keijer points out: "Shopping in a supermarket is not fun. Picking-your-own is. That is the difference."

DUFF HART-DAVIS

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THE SLAUGHTER of wildlife on roads is horrific at every season of the year, but summer is probably the most lethal time of all. Young animals and birds are starting to range farther afield, but have no experience of the speed at which cars travel. Countless fox cubs are killed, and many a hen pheasant or partridge brings her newly-hatched brood out on to Tarmac, looking for grit along the edges, only to have

her whole family flattened. Deer are vulnerable, as well, especially on roads that pass through woodlands: reflectors mounted beside the road at an angle, so that they flash headlights sideways into the trees, have proved only moderately successful at persuading animals not to cross.

NATURE NOTE

Mortality is also high when farmers cut fields of grass for hay or silage. Pheasants and ducks sit tight on their nests; deer fawns and hares lie low until they are cut to pieces. Our neighbour, distressed by repeated fatal accidents, has come up with what seems a brilliant idea for saving the lives of wild creatures;

that tractors should be fitted with infrared heat-detectors like those which switch on anti-burglar lights outside buildings.

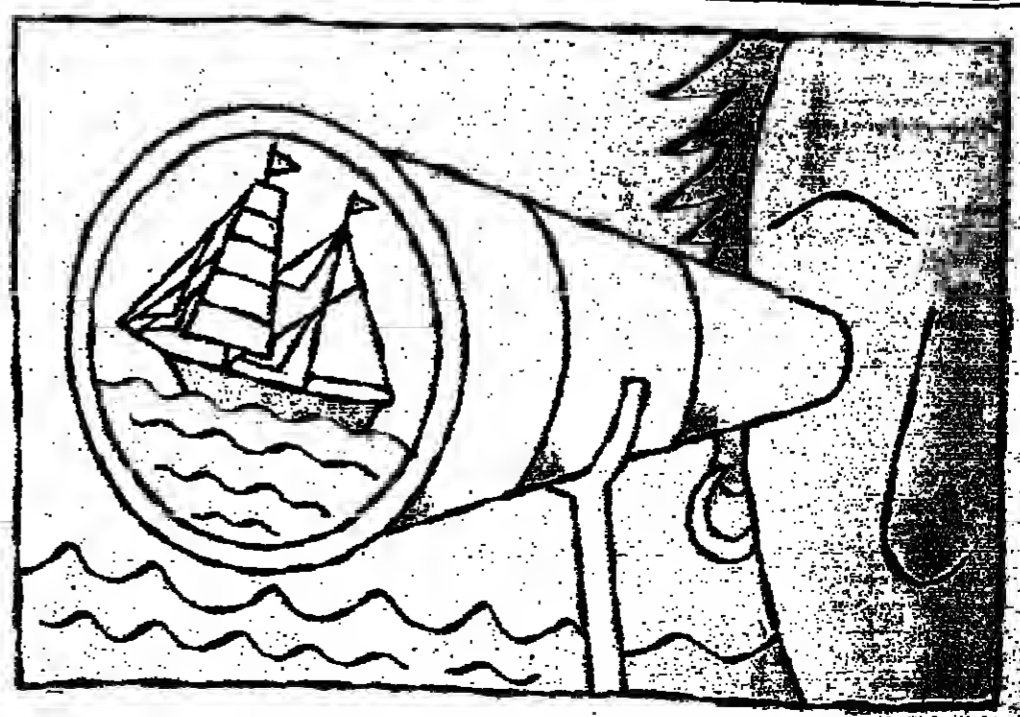
A device of this kind could be focused a few yards ahead of the tractor, so that a light would come on in the tractor's cab whenever there was a live creature ahead, giving the driver time to pull up and investigate.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEKEND

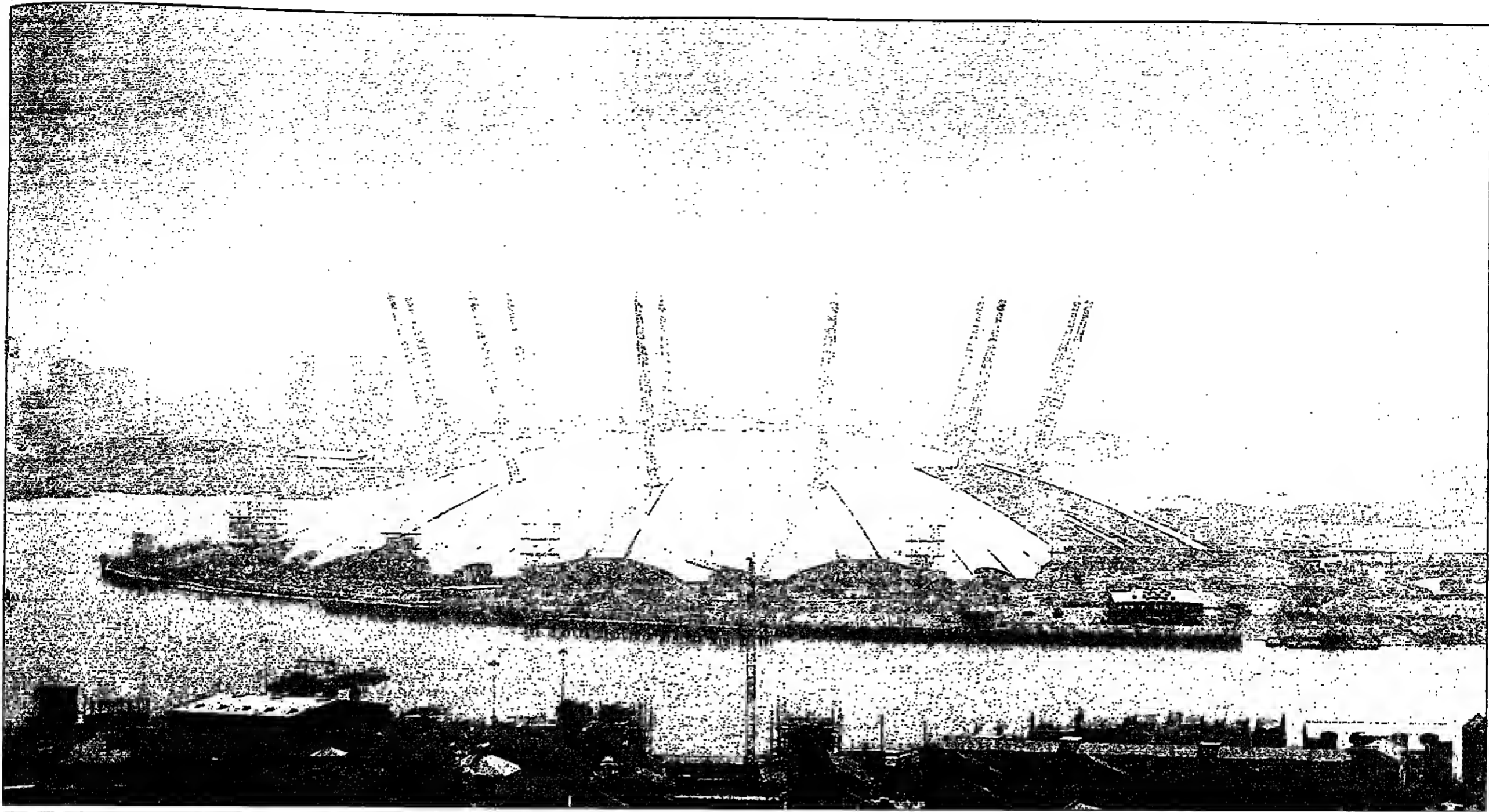
SHIVER YOUR timbers when you take the opportunity to go aboard some of the 100 sailing ships in Falmouth Harbour waiting to set off on the Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race. Their first port of call will be Lisbon, but before they weigh anchor you can visit barques, brigantines, schooners and sloops, and meet some of their multinational crews. For those not so nautically inclined there are aerobatic displays by the Red Arrows, concerts at the castle, a Swamp Circus Spectacular and a harbour firework extravaganza.

The Tall Ships are at Falmouth, Cornwall, until 19 July. Red Arrows display 3.00pm today. Swamp Circus this afternoon, fireworks tonight at 10pm. The Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race starts on Sunday at 3pm and finishes in Dublin on the weekend of 22 August. More information on 0891 22 1998.

SALLY KINDBERG



TRAVEL



The Millennium Dome, looking like an upturned wok pierced by a ring of spikes, on route 108

All aboard the Mandelson Express

Worried about the millennium bug? Take the Millennium Bus instead. Simon Calder boards the 108 to Stratford

The simplest way to get to the Taj Mahal, New Delhi or the Khyber Pass is by bus. London Buses is running a jokey slogan about how to reach Indian restaurants. My destination was even more ambitious: the next millennium.

To reach the Millennium Dome there will, as has been widely reported, be a new station at North Greenwich on the Jubilee Line extension - which may or may not be running by New Year's Eve 1999. But you can already reach the home of the New Millennium Experience on bus No 108. This is the route that crosses the Greenwich meridian twice, links both sides of the Thames and ferries workers to the Dome. And a ride along its length could be the best 80p you'll spend on travel all year.

At five past five on Tuesday morning, a pinkening sky above Lewisham was scarred by a 747 from the Far East, waiting westwards on the final approach to Heathrow. As the sun flashed from a fuselage at 10,000 feet, a fellow prospective passenger at ground level was grumbling about the tardiness of the first 108 of the day. "He's late, and then he goes into the bus garage to sit down. Can you imagine?"

At such unsocial times you might expect empathy between a few human beings who happen to be awake in London, SE13. But having dragged myself out of bed at 4am to be first in the 108 queue (currently comprising him and me), I could understand his tetchiness. By the end of the journey, though, the reason for dawdling was clear

as the roads at dawn: no traffic means that the six-mile run takes rather less than the 30 minutes allowed in the timetable.

As the bus chugged off, the sun creaked up a degree, splashing the place with a flattering pale glow. Having retraced the 108 route more than once, I have tried hard to find a repository for affection in Lewisham. All I could locate in this anonymous, shopping-centre suburb was a bowling-alley and an elaborate clock tower. The latter owes its existence to the citizens' joy at Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee.

As the bus got into its early-morning stride on the climb up Belmont Hill, chain stores melted into ranks of stereotypical homes, and the surroundings becoming predictably leafier with altitude. The Victorian bulk of St Margaret's church is hardly a surprise, either - but the desolate graveyard opposite startsles you. Among the shambles of tombs is the grave of Charlotte Seager, "one of the oldest inhabitants of Blackheath" when she died, aged 90, in 1869. Beyond, crouching beneath a fringe of trees, is a ruined chapel. The decaying sandstone walls towards the earth in the desolate manner that you might expect in Norfolk or Normandy, but rarely in the depths of suburbia.

You cross the Greenwich Meridian for the first time here: the Royal Observatory that guards the circumference jealously is exactly a mile north. The 108 sweeps down into Blackheath, a middle-class colony that resembles a rural village transplanted to (or engulfed by) south east London. Everything, from the generously engineered railway station

to the handsomely appointed Blackheath Bookshop, exudes prosperity. A whiff of recession can be found on the window of a newly closed restaurant. "Previous tenant now insolvent and has left no forwarding address."

As you rise out of the village, the street names become more extravagant, with Tranquil Vale leading to Royal Parade and Montpelier Row, ushering you to the open space of the heath itself. One of the highest points in all of south London, Blackheath affords views of the Eiffel-esque pair of television transmitters at Crystal Palace, marching off towards the North Downs.

The heath has been strategically important for a couple of millennia. The Romans' Watling Street, now Shooters' Hill Road or the A2, shoots clean across the common. Wat Tyler and his followers camped here in 1381 during the Peasants' Revolt against poll tax; in 1988 the local band Squeeze played for free in protest against a later poll tax.

Another bequest of the Thatcher era is that this is no red London bus; in pale green and sharp blue, the single-deck 108 announces itself to be a Lewisham Link Harris Bus.

At Vanbrugh Park, the population of the bus doubled when three passengers boarded. When you make the trip, stop off here for the finest treat of the trip: "A Gambardella, High Class Refreshments", as the fading sign boasts. This is a perfectly preserved café with plastic table tops worn thin by thousands of breakfasters. Beside the counter, a huge dinosaur of a fridge sports a sticker for Wall's ice-cream, circa 1960. Fake flesh-coloured marble panels are hoisted to the ceiling by strips of chrome, while the staff shuffle around as energetically as age permits.

That's the nice bit over with. The descent to East Greenwich is notable for Westcombe Park police station, a red-brick mansion swathed in ivy and flanked

by impeccable flower beds - plus a watchtower on the roof, where you get a fine view of the traffic queuing on the motorway to the Blackwall Tunnel, and the first glimpse of the Dome. When the Blackwall Tunnel opened in 1897, it provided the main link between the two halves of Docklands - by tram. The tracks were ripped up long ago, so now everyone proceeds by road towards Greenwich Point - the venue for Britain's bid for millennium glory.

Imagine a ghostly upturned wok pierced by a ring of spikes, and you have the exact image of the Millennium Dome. Close up, you see that it is not a proper dome but a "cable net tent", basically a very large marquee that looks as though it will flutter away with the first strong gust of the year 2000.

Meanwhile, you cross the meridian as the Mandelson Express - sorry, bus No 108 - passes through a monumental gateway to the Blackwall Tun-

nel. A pink-and-cream granite mock-up of a baronial castle, escaped from the Scottish highlands to London SE10, guards the entrance to the 101-year-old tunnel - and looks much more enduring than the Dome.

Once within the tunnel, you could switch briefly to bus-spotter mode and bore your fellow passengers with the fact that they are currently on the longest stretch between any two stops for any regular London bus: 1.4 miles.

The light at the north end of the tunnel is an altogether different hue to that at the south. All the redevelopment money has seeped south to the Dome, leaving a six-lane corridor to wend its charmless way through a mile of urban misery. It could have been so different: Bromley-by-Bow, the expansive name for this trail of ugliness, was on the final shortlist for the millennium site.

Relief turns up at the most unexpected of places: the roundabout beneath the Bow flyover. The concrete of the roadway itself is celebrated in local folklore as being the final resting-place for various gangland hoodlums during its construction in the Seventies, but the centre has been reclaimed by artists collectively signing themselves "FUMING MAD". A circle of crushed bicycles, their trail skeletons painted pastel pinks and greens, has been created as a protest against the way that cars and trucks terrorise east London.

Prize for the foulest high street in Britain goes to Stratford. Six more lanes of traffic, each apparently vying to be the fastest, carve through dereliction in the general direction

of Essex. Perversely, Stratford proper begins as the high street ends. The 108 rounds its final corner to reveal two brand-new marvels: the floating roof of the bus station and an imaginative glass temple to the god of rail travel. Change here at the fine new station for Paris - except that no one knows when, or if, the Channel Tunnel rail link will ever reach Stratford. You can get the tube to Leytonstone, though.

While you decide your next move, you may care to tackle the touch-screen information system that looks as though it has

been there for about 20 minutes, but has already jammed. Like a cryptic Mesopotamian scroll, the screen reveals a profundity that eludes the average bus user. At 5.40am on Tuesday, it announced: "The system was unable to find a route between St Martin's Church and Walthamstow Greyhound Stadium."

"This could be," it continues inscrutably, "because they are too far apart, or too close." We may never know the answer to that particular puzzle, but surely this is grist to the mill for millennial mystics.

ROUTE 108 - THE FAST FACTS

THE BUS runs every day of the year, except Christmas Day, between Lewisham and Stratford bus stations. The first departure from each end is at 5am (6am on Sundays), and the last bus sets off at 12.40am every night. The minimum fare is 60p for distances of up to a mile and a half, after that, the maximum fare of 80p applies.

Getting there: Both ends of

the route are adjacent to rail stations. Lewisham is on the line from Charing Cross and Waterloo. Stratford can be reached from Liverpool Street, Richmond and stations in Essex, or on the Central Line of the Underground. The closest airport is London City, connected to Stratford by bus and train. You can reach it by air from Manchester and Edinburgh on KLM UK (0990 074074).

Accommodation: three hotels are adjacent to route 108, all on the south side of the Thames. In Blackheath, try the Clarendon on Montpelier Row and the Cactus Hotel (0181-852 0883) on Royal Parade; in East Greenwich, the Greenwich Hotel.

More information: London Transport Enquiries (0171-222 1234); Greenwich tourist office (0181-858 6376).

CHECK IN



A drink
The winelands of the Cape feature on a new South Africa tour from British Airways Holidays (0870 242424). For £211 single/£719 double, you get six days of touring, meals and wine tasting. Flights to and from Cape Town are not included.

A room
One room of the Royal Naval College

in Greenwich is given over to the Millennium Experience Visitor Centre (0181-305 3456), which gives an overview of the plans for the Dome. It opens 11am-7pm, Monday to Friday, 10am-6pm at weekends.

A plane
There are good transatlantic air fares this summer, but mainly to the East Coast. Southwest Airlines, the leading low-cost US domestic carrier, sells cut-price tickets to British travellers. Call 01293 396677 for details of the "Freedom USA Pass". This costs £49 per flight within the western US, £63 within the central and eastern zones. A flight between the two areas costs £98.

A train
The latest excellent offer from

Belgian railways is a bike/rail package called Train + Fiets: bikes are available for hire at Bruges, Blankenburg, Ostend, Knokke, Veurne for BEF 225 (under £4) per day, so long as you have a train ticket, BEF 100 more if you don't. You can leave it in any of the other stations, and take it on the train.

A boat
The pioneering SS Great Britain, launched in 1843, is venue for a free-for-all tomorrow. An open day is being staged at the steamship at Great Western Dock in Bristol. Call 0117-926 0680 for details.

A week from now
... the latest service from Go (0845 60 54321) will be under way. The Expo '98 site, Lisbon, joins the

network of no-frills services from Stansted. Existing routes serve Copenhagen, Milan and Rome. The lowest fare to each destination is £100 return.

A month from now
... Weymouth goes wild. The Dorset resort will be hosting the Radio One Road Show, staging its annual carnival and mounting a free fireworks festival. Weymouth tourist information: 01305 785747.

A year from now
... an Alaska cruise aboard Norwegian Wind is on offer from Kuoni (01306 742888). The holiday includes flights from Heathrow to Vancouver and two nights in the city. The price per person, sharing an inside cabin, is £1,747.

"Les électricques are en le blinke...?"

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A meal
No sign remains of the world's first McDonald's restaurant, which Dick McDonald, who died this week, established with his brother Mac at the corner of 14th and E Streets in San Bernardino. But you can catch buses from the world's busiest airport and end up at the first link in the world's busiest chain of hamburger restaurants. Ray Kroc, an Illinois-based salesman, opened his first McDonald's restaurant on Lee Street in Des Plaines in 1955 - near Chicago O'Hare airport. It closed 15 years ago, but has been preserved as a museum - dedicated to Ray Kroc, described on a plaque as "Leader and Friend". On opening day, 18 April 1955, an All-American Meal - hamburger, fries and milk shake - cost 45 cents (30p).

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The thrill of running aground

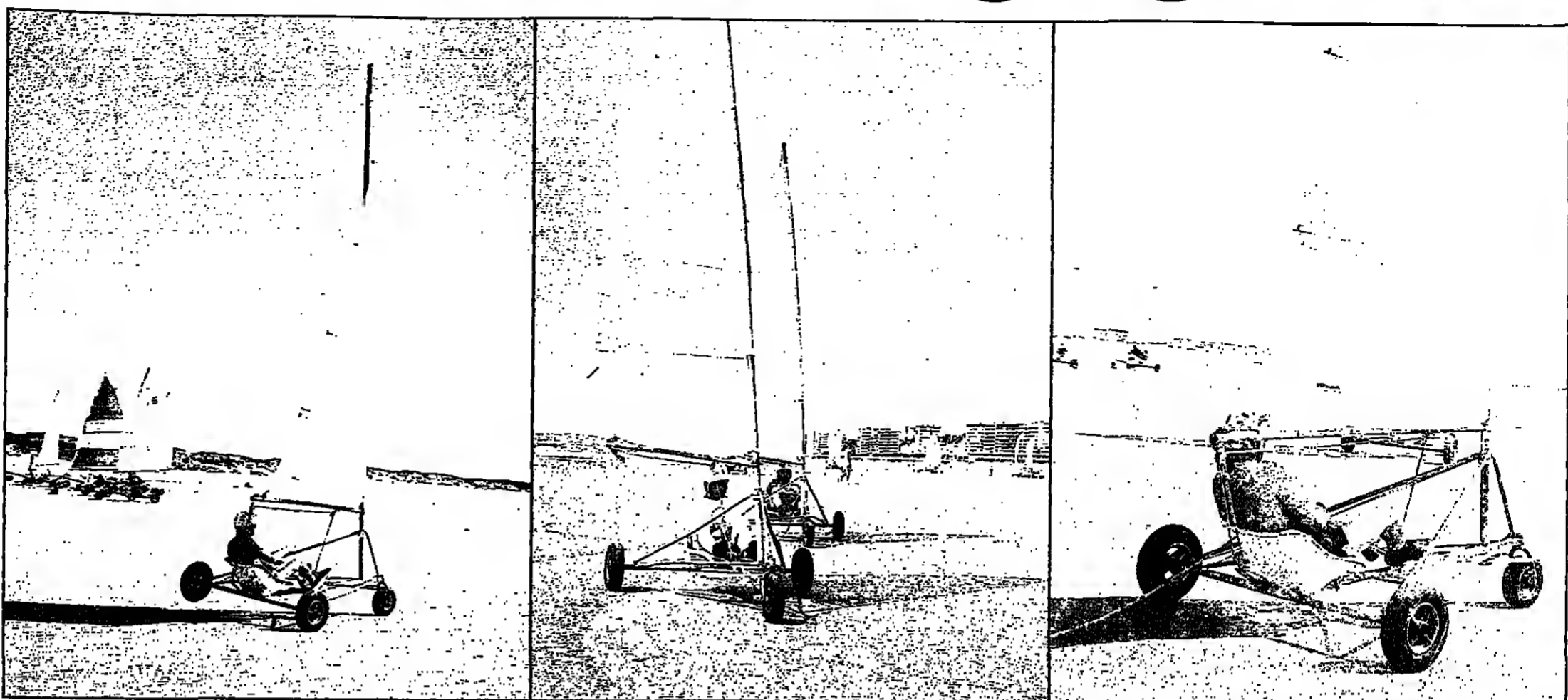
Forget your bucket and spade. The best thing to do on a beach is land yachting. By Eric Kendall

WHEN BLERIOT made his first historic flight across the Channel, little did he know of the fun that awaited him. Over on the untramelled sands of the north European coast, the land-yacht was evolving, being developed and raced by a number of early aviators, including a couple of Belgian brothers.

Land-yachting is one of the most exciting things you can possibly do on a sandy beach, eclipsing all that stuff with donkeys, suntan oil and seaweed. Apart from the obvious appeal – all the fun of sailing without the risk of being seasick or of imminent submersion – comes serious speed and astonishing acceleration. It is also amazingly easy to learn, allowing you to go from novice to 45mph in next to no time. It is all rather surprising first time round, though the fact that land-yacht drivers are referred to as pilots should ring some alarm bells.

Of course, miles per hour do not count for much without something to relate to, which is where land-yachting really scores. The sand rushes by just inches from your body, hurtling beneath the wheels, making even moderate speeds feel like warp-factor six. With just one small sail, it is hard to believe the power at your disposal, but three pram wheels on firm sand clearly offer less resistance than the hull of a boat through water.

Apart from this key difference, a land-yacht is really just another sailing machine. Its structure obviously does not need to float so anything, from tubular steel to more hi-tech materials formed into an aerodynamic shape, is used to support the



Set sail: who needs the risk of a dunking or seasickness when there are thrills but few spills in land yachting?

Penny Kendall

rider, the mast, and as something to screw the wheels on to.

The yacht is steered by the front wheel rather than by a rudder and the single sail is operated exactly as you would a dinghy mainsail, by pulling a single rope. In essence, as long as you do not try to sail straight into the wind, the harder you pull on the rope to bring the sail in, the faster you go. Call it an accelerator and people generally get the picture. Problems only arise at speed, when the instinct to hang on tight or pull even harder kicks in. In fact, if too much wind threatens to send the whole machine over sideways, that is when you need to let go.

As with boat sailing, you can roll it in less time than it takes to say "Mon Dieu, that was a close one!" A wide wheel-base has to compen-

THIS IS the centenary year of modern land-yachting, with the World Championships being held in De Panne, Belgium, where the sport originated. Similar beaches along the north coast of France, particularly at Le Touquet, make this a good area in which to learn. Three-times world champion and world speed

LAND-YACHTING FOR BEGINNERS

record holder, Bertrand Lambert, runs the Centre de Char à Voile du Touquet (tel/fax: 0033 321 659319). Having travelled at 151.5kph in 50kph wind, Bertrand definitely knows

his onions. For other centres, contact the Pas-de-Calais tourist board (0033 321 833259, <http://www.pas-de-calais.com>). In the UK, the scene is much smaller. Contact the British

Federation of Sand and Land Yacht Clubs (01509 842292), <http://www.moreairdemon.co.uk/lyachts>, or try Windsport International (01326 376191) who have three bases in Britain. Land-yachts need plenty of open space – beaches at low tide, with hard-packed sand, are ideal.

sharply, relying on momentum to carry you through. Initially, it is the hardest part – you might just find yourself rolling to a standstill. Half of this action – turning into the wind – and letting go of the sail is the only way to stop when you need to. No anchor is supplied.

But from the first moment of stepping aboard, anchors are the last thing on the mind.

Feeling that surge of power from the sail and hauling it in to accelerate past the enemy, cutting sharply in at the last possible moment to move up several positions on a bend, before catapulting into the straight, the message is clear – taking part is nothing and winning is everything, whether you are on your first outing or taking part in the land-yachting world championships.

Men behaving nautically

Sailing from Southampton to the Isle of Wight may seem a modest ambition. For Andrew Thorman, it was anything but

FINE – SO we had no washing-up liquid. You can't remember everything. The answer was to go begging. Our yacht, a 35-footer with six berths and a crew of five blokes on a sailing weekend, was moored at Cowes on the Isle of Wight. We were surrounded by ocean racers, many of them flying international flags, and people strutting about in deck shoes and burnt-orange trousers. Yep, we had arrived among the nation's sea-faring set. Ah, but would anyone have some spare washing-up liquid?

We approached a couple of old-timers sunbathing on the deck of their gas-guzzling gin palace. "Hello. Sorry to disturb you, but could you spare a drop of washing-up liquid?" I asked sheepishly.

"Of course we can. You poor thing. We saw you arrive. It must have been a difficult crossing. How long have you been at sea?"

Now, I could have lied. And on reflection, I wish I had. The answer was an hour and a half.

We had just crossed to the Isle of Wight from Southampton. All of a couple of miles away. In fact you could almost see the exact point we had just left. And the reason we were looking a bit dishevelled had nothing to do with the sea conditions, but with the fact that we'd spent most of the day trying to get the sails up.

Having forked out nearly £700 to hire our German-built yacht *Giberyn* for the two days, we had then remained firmly moored while attempts were made to hoist the mainsail. The boss of the charter company came aboard to explain it was all to do with the wrong tension on the backstay. That's the bit of wire that helps support the mast. But his attempts at remedying the situation were futile. Eventually three blokes arrived with a bosun's chair. The fattest of them was then laboriously hauled up the mast to inspect the pulley system at



Boats galore line up at Cowes on the Isle of Wight

the top, which had jammed. There was much shouting, much cursing and much to do about nothing. We opened the first case of beer and started to exchange salty dog stories. Well, in fact, we did not have any yet. So we just sat, drank and watched. Eventually various bits of coloured rope were replaced with different coloured ones and the sail was successfully hoisted. So six hours after we had taken delivery of our boat, we set sail. The wind died and we lowered the sails. I knew we would not need them in the end.

Next morning, the skipper, who had recently completed a navigation course, announced the details of the day's passage. "We're off to spot the nudes at Studland Bay. Bear 180 degrees," he boomed from below. Up on deck, we found it easier just to point towards the beach. The skip remained below, constantly recalculating our exact position. We remained on deck drinking cans of beer, eating peanuts and generally polluting the atmosphere. It was around this time that

place where you have to take your shoes off before stepping ashore. We found an Indian restaurant and set about boring the pants off every other diner with stories of middle-aged misdemeanours. More poppadums and beer.

It was somewhere between the chicken bryani and the After Eight mints that I realised I could probably have taken my whole family to Disneyland for the week for what this weekend was costing me. I lost count of the number of £20 "kitties" and calls of "another five pints?"

We were cruising back up The Solent towards our home berth when the next "incident" occurred. I remember pointing to some vast, rusty hulk in the far distance.

Shortly afterwards a motorboat sped towards us and the crew belowed out some indecipherable message. But it was not too difficult to work it out. The rusty hulk had now become a six-storey block of flats masquerading as an oil tanker. It was heading straight for us. This was not the time to suggest that the captain heed the law of the sea – put in other words, that steam always gives way to sail.

He was doing nine knots. We were doing three. He was half a million tons. We were two. When the tough get going, the going gets the hell out of there. "So anyone know how to start the engine?" whimpers the sucker at the wheel.

Could we find the right electric switch. Could we heck. Like everything else on the boat, it seemed to be designed to confuse you. But the fact that I am able to write this proves that we did find it – and we did get motoring.

Andrew Thorman and his friends hired their boats from Fairview Sailing at Point Hmble, near Southampton (01703 457023). The cost of their boat was £680 for a weekend, plus a security deposit of £500



SIMON CALDER

BEFORE THE Labour Party starts spin-doctoring, the answer is "Yes – I do have a tape". Indeed, so astonished was I by what the Prime Minister had to say on transport policy, I wound the recording back to check Mr Blair's exact words.

The event was last month's opening of the Heathrow Express. In his speech he demonstrated that he shares transport preferences with Baroness Thatcher: opting for flying combined with car-driving, rather than the cleaner, safer and cheaper alternative of rail travel. Mr Blair told how he had rejected the option of Britain's fastest railway in favour of short, high-impact domestic flights.

To avoid any unfairness, I offer a transcript of that part of the Prime Minister's speech. "I used to live in London, just by the Arsenal, and when I used to fly up to my constituency in Teesside, virtually every weekend, I would get on the Tube at the Arsenal Tube station and it would take about an hour to get to Heathrow. And I used to sit there and whenever I had a vision of what a transport policy should be like I used to think, 'well, what it should be like is to be able to get to Heathrow quickly'. That was my

vision for a 21st-century transport policy."

Was Tony Blair collecting frequent flyer points (at the taxpayers' expense), or what? Three stops along the Piccadilly line from Arsenal station is King's Cross, where, even before privatisation, Britain's fastest trains were waiting to whisk politicians and paying punters to Darlington in three hours flat, with good connections to Teesside. It takes another hour on the Piccadilly line to Heathrow, where the Prime Minister checked in.

Ironically, the taxpayers' money that Tony Blair spent on flying to Teesside went to British Midland. The airline became so rich that during the last election campaign it was able to lend John Major a Boeing for his personal full-time use.

Back to basics: so how did our present Prime Minister continue his journey from Teesside airport? There is a rail connection to the airport's station... but 15 months into the life of this new public transport Labour Government, it still has just one train a week in either direction. So Mr Blair almost certainly continued his journey by road. Those who are keen to see investment in transport infrastructure more broadly targeted than the Heathrow Express – which seems intended mainly for business travellers in a hurry – may be troubled by the Prime Minister's promise "to realise that vision of a proper integrated transport policy for the country".

"WE WOULD like to advise you that as from today Viajes Fantastico will now be called Cubanacan Viajes Tours." This fax, from a specialist Cuban tour operator in London, asks far more questions than it answers. It was passed on by Neil Taylor of Regent Holidays in Bristol, who says: "Isn't it a pity that a firm can no longer see itself as fantastic and has to devalue itself to being merely Tours Tours. I wish we knew more." Perhaps the Labour Party could pinch the slogan, and start

selling Policies Fantastico.

I HAVE JUST bought a ticket on one of Britain's most beautiful railways: the line between Edinburgh and Inverness, a trip that starts with a miraculous bridge over the Forth and concludes with a noble flourish of a viaduct on the approach to its terminus. A bargain at £21 return, if you book a week in advance. I did; but at the end of the call I mentioned my plan for the return journey: to travel as far as Dalwhinnie under my own steam, and join the southbound train there.

"You can't do that." The reservations clerk insisted that any passenger foolish enough to try walking or cycling 50 miles rather than taking the train would be punished: "They'll take your ticket away and make you get off the train. You have to get on the train at Inverness, or your ticket isn't valid."

As a deterrent to travellers, this ranks alongside ScotRail's persecution of cyclists (documented in these pages, and finally corrected this summer with the addition of more bike space). But it leaves me with a quandary: should I risk it anyway, and what should I say to the train's conductor if caught? Answers on a platform ticket, please.

PRAGUE & BUDAPEST

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The city of Prague, built along the banks of the Vltava River and on the surrounding hills, has often been described as the "Hundred Spired Golden Praha", the "Rome of the North". It was the chief city of the old kingdom of Bohemia and the cultural centre of Europe in the 14th century, enriched by artists and architects from France, Germany, and Italy. Today, Prague still retains its magnificent 18th-century character. The skyline is a fairytale scenario of domes and spires.

No less a city of spires is Budapest, one of the gracious cities through which the Danube meanders on its way to the Black Sea. From austere Gothic, stately Renaissance and hardly-restrained Oriental decoration to the exuberance of the Baroque, the ancient towns of Buda and Pest recall the influence of past invaders.

Both cities endured nearly 40 years of life behind the former Iron Curtain but have emerged relatively unscathed by the dead hand of dictatorial administration to a new flowering.

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Lure of the big deep



On the coast near Malindi - where, despite the luxury hotels, the people remain at heart a fishing community

James Strachan/Robert Harding Picture Library

In Africa, there's more to the wildlife than lions and leopards. Paula Hardy goes big-game fishing

Through the binoculars we could see that *The Albatross* was flying a string of flags: three white and one black. Someone had caught a black marlin.

Late afternoon has to be the most sociable time of day on the east African coast, especially in the deep sea fishing season. At 4pm, bored of the strain of relaxing, everyone gathers on the terrace to take tea and await the daily ritual of the returning fishing boats.

Those coming in with a big game fish fly a series of coloured flags to signal their catch: white for more than 20kg, blue for marlin, black for black marlin and a red cross on a white background for shark. That day one of the anglers had been lucky.

East Africa is perhaps better known for its safaris and savannahs than for deep-sea fishing, but there is more to the big-game scene than lions and leopards, and this variety, unseen and unheard, is infinitely more elusive and unpredictable.

From the Great Barrier Reef in Australia to the Cabo San Lucas on Mexico's Baja peninsula, anglers from all over the world religiously trail in the wake of these migrating fish, and towards the end of the year they

start flocking to Malindi, hoping for that perfect catch. Once visited by the likes of Lady Delamere and Ernest Hemingway, Malindi and its protected marine park lie off the beaten track 70 miles north of Mombasa, and although hotels up and down the coast provide every imaginable luxury, the town and its people are still, at heart, a fishing community.

There is nowhere more suitable to stay than Hemingway's hotel, named after the great man himself. Throughout, tell-tale signs only hint at the fanatical following that fishing inspires. Each day the times of tides and the availability of boats are chalked up on boards in the entrance hall, while the main bar sports a variety of plaster casts and photographs that cannot fail to impress the novice (the largest marlin cast records an astounding weight of 1,000lb). If restaurants are more your scene you will not be disappointed, as each day a huge variety of fresh fish and crustacea is served up in exotic local dishes, such as smoked sailfish, prawns piri piri and tuna fish curry.

Having been ensconced around the pool for several days watching the return of anglers, we felt it was high time to initiate ourselves into the mysterious art of deep-sea fish-

ing. Hesitant because of our almost total ignorance, we were finally persuaded to make up our minds when a fellow hotel guest, Don, and his son Adrian returned with an extraordinary catch of 24 yellow-finned tuna. That was it; we had to see what all the excitement was about.

Deciding on a full day's fishing, I and two other eager but inept friends

chartered a boat from one of the local skippers, and set out at the ungodly hour of 6.30am. Equipped with all the benefits of advanced technology and with a top speed of 30 knots, *The Albatross* was certainly a boat to be proud of. In the centre of the deck, looking like something out of *Jaws*, was the "fighting" chair, positioned on a swivel. It came equipped with

a gimbel for the rod, and a foot-rest against which you could brace yourself as you reeled in your line.

Fishing rods had been secured all around the boat, and, threading the lines with expert skill, Kimathi, our wireman, arranged the tangled spider's web into some sort of order as we made our way out to sea.

The two lines suspended from the

outriggers were shallow lines, and these trailed brightly coloured lures just below the surface of the water, to attract the elusive sailfish. The other three lines trailing from the stem were weighted to trawl the water at a much lower depth - these were the tuna lines.

When the time of reckoning finally came and one of the lines started to stream away over the back of the boat, we were all so excited that we rushed around panic-stricken, until Kimathi handed one of us the rod. When my turn came, I was surprised by how difficult it proved to be - it seemed to take for ever, and as every muscle in my arms ached from the strain, I was convinced that my fish must be of whale-like proportions. As it happens, it turned out to be a not-so-gigantic tuna.

Despite the excitement of the fishing, the best experience of the day was when a sailfish exploded from the water, showing off all the grace and speed for which they are renowned. It was a beautiful sight: a flash of silver in the late-afternoon sun.

Careful of these living treasures, Hemingway's operates the largest tag-and-release scheme along the Kenyan coastline which helps to keep a tight control on the numbers

of fish caught. It also enables would-be fishermen to enjoy these extraordinary fish in their natural habitat while experiencing the excitement of big-game fishing in the most politically correct fashion possible.

Although we flew no flags on our return, we still felt mildly heroic bringing in our catch under the gaze of the usual tea-time crowd. After our fish had been weighed-in and chalked up on the hotel blackboard, it was the chef's turn.

Descending from the terrace, he offered us first choice of the catch and then set about prodding each fish in turn before selecting the best for the evening meal. The rest were packed up in cool boxes and whisked off to the market in Malindi.

With supper decided, we retired to the bar to stand our skipper a drink, and whiled away the rest of the afternoon by discussing the highs and lows of the day's fishing, and before long we were stretching the truth along with the best of them.

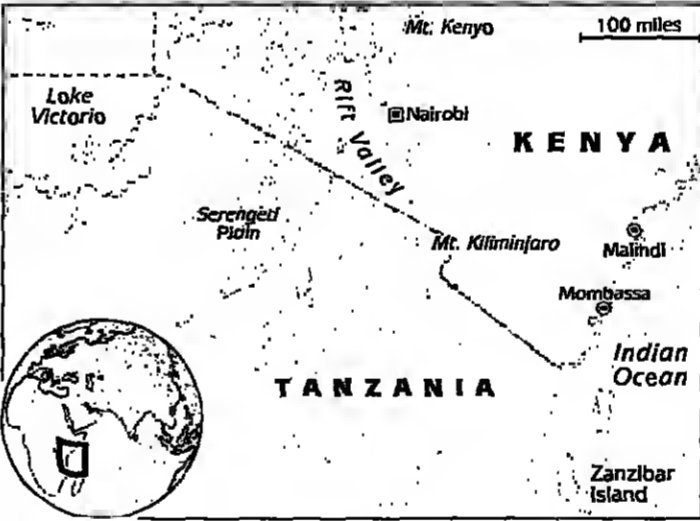
That is the funny thing about fishing. Even if you do not get a single bite all day, the limitless possibilities secreted away beneath the surface of the ocean keep your stories well fuelled, and keep you going back for more. And I, for one, was hooked.

TRAVEL FACTS

Getting there: to Nairobi, British Airways flies from Gatwick, and Kenya Airways from Heathrow, every evening of the week. Discount fares are widely available, but the lowest prices normally involve a change of plane. There are also several charters each week to Mombasa.

Red tape: British passport holders must pay £35 for a visa, payable upon arrival in Kenya.

Health: malaria and other diseases are prevalent in Kenya. Seek professional advice on precautions well in advance.



The great white hunter carries a camera

Safari camps, coral reefs, exotic markets - is this the reality of tourism in Kenya? David Evans looks behind the romance

THE WARNING sign at the Shelley Beach Hotel said it all: "Beware falling coconuts". Whether anyone took any notice, lazing as they were beside the pool beneath the lush palms overlooking the Indian Ocean, was another matter.

This was tropical paradise, East Kenyan style. A heady mix of post British and Portuguese colonialism, exotic spice markets, safari treks, Arab dhows, Maasai warriors, coral reefs

and vast tracts of virgin white sands. All just a 12-hour flight from Gatwick.

In the Shelley's restaurant, another notice was a reminder of more halcyon times - of Fifties British manners. Menfolk, it politely requested, should "dress formally" for dinner. Yet by the pool, English youths sporting tattoos and Bermuda shorts are the norm, refugees perhaps from Benidorm.

Here, certain standards

were still expected, irrespective of the fact that a week's all-in package cost £500 or less and that the hotel's potent Kenyan beer was free, as was virtually every other drink, along with the barbecued delicacies of zebra, impala and ostrich meat.

Yet today it is paradise with a social price, too. The average Kenyan wage, when there is work, is roughly one-eighth of a British wage. Poverty is wide-

spread. Literally across the road from Mombasa's gentrified vortex that is the Shelley Beach Hotel is a typical African village housing some 2,000 impoverished tribe folk, whose homes are without electricity or water and where children run barefoot amid the goats and chickens.

Britain may have granted independence to the then president Jomo Kenyatta in 1963, but there is still an air of pa-

tronising colonialism about touring mud huts and dispensing largesse - cough sweets, pencils and other trinkets - to groups of often malnourished, yet ever-laughing, children. It is a form of inverted corruption, although it has to be compared with the corruption endemic in Kenyan politics. When Mr Kenyatta died in 1978 he was reputedly one of the world's richest men. Arap Moi, his replacement, has undoubtedly brought some stability to a country of 40 or more competing tribes - and stability is a rare commodity in Africa.

But, as the January elections demonstrated, it is not without allegations of vote-rigging and human rights abuses. Moi, too, has a palatial holiday palace overlooking nearby Mombasa harbour. No photography allowed, of course, even by tourists. Visitors to Kenya, though, are little troubled by affairs of high state. More irksome is the constant pitching

by beach boys - local youths who live off the fruits of the sea and, better still, off tourists.

From dawn to the glowing orange of dusk they monitor the movements of overseas visitors, waiting to sell them souvenirs. No currency left? No problem. Barter with your shirt or shoes. "What have you got, my friend?" demand the youths persistently. More worrying are the occasional muggings: "Don't wear jewellery or carry expensive belongings outside the hotel camp," was the standard advice. To go on safari - involving long, hot, dusty treks across country in open-top "dormobiles" is almost de rigueur among visitors. Here, it is much the same story. "Have you any currency?" enquired one enterprising local resident at a pit stop, adding: "I give you good rate." Failing that, he asked: "Do you have any label clothes?"

At the remote safari camps patrolled by elephants and lions, there is a faint air of sur-

realism bordering on the ridiculous in that now, instead of sporting a 12-bore shotgun, your average tourist totes a motorised Canon camera.

"And how is the Great White Hunter tonight?" inquired my Swahili waiter that evening at the safari lodge, spotting my cheap, 35mm instant camera. His remark, I thought, was not without a hint of sarcasm, though perhaps I was being over-sensitive. Outside, the ubiquitous mosquitoes seemed to hum equal insouciance. Perhaps we deserved it.

Back at the Shelley, where deadly green mamba snakes vied with flame-dancing limbo dancers as the night's entertainment, the ever-polite bell

boys similarly vied for patronage: if you can't give a tip, then a few cast-off tongs will, as ever, be cheerfully accepted.

Kenya, post-British colonialism, is a nation struggling to find a niche in modern Africa, and probably doing better than most in seizing on the value of tourism. For the visitor, though, is it worth the effort? No, if you expect a sanitised holiday or a return to the colonial Fifties. Definitely yes if you like safari adventure, coral reef scuba explorations and the innate sense of hanging loose that is Kenya.

Oh - and take lots of pens (they are also handy for bartering), and some candles for the regular power blackouts.

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صكنا بن الامل

Decadence and delirium the Cajun way

New Orleans' heady mix of street life and sensuality makes it the pleasure capital of the US. By James Rampton

THE WOMAN at the local tourist office gave it to me straight. "New Orleans is not noted for its morality," she confided with a wicked grin. It may not be, but it is all the better for it. Is there another city in the world so unashamedly devoted to hedonism? As visitors and locals have over the centuries lost themselves in a swamp of merriment, music and munching, New Orleans has gained itself the appropriate nickname of "The Big Easy".

To wander around the French Quarter, day or night, is to enter a modern-day pleasure-dome. In particular, Bourbon Street - named after the French dynasty but it could as easily apply to the drink of choice - has more buzz than a chainsaw factory.

Sensory overload threatens with the assault of sights, sounds and smells. Strolling down the thoroughfare is like being at a world music convention; every other building is a bar resounding to a different kind of beat: Cajun, zydeco, Dixieland, rock'n'roll, Irish, R&B or honky-tonk.

Young boys attach steel plates to the soles of their state-of-the-art trainers and tap their way to mountains of small change. A banjo-player in an elongated, multi-coloured top-hat (traditional local dress), picks out what sounds like the greatest hits from *Deliverance* and punters throw dollar bills for his knickerbocker-clad dog to collect.

The sound of a lone trumpeter running through *As Time Goes By* wafts up from the nearby Mississippi waterfront. Mime artists imitate statues. It is one big street party.

The area throbs with tall tales of pirates and ghosts and a most un-American sense of history. Voodoo shops sell items like "follow me drops" and "courtship powder"; their walls plastered with creepy masks, skeletons and notices asking tourists to respect the culture and not take photos. But they - along with the myriad strip-clubs, stores selling penis-shaped pasta and transvestite bars - only add to an experience as rich as the local gumbo.

To get a little peace and quiet, stroll around the gorgeous French Quarter. The rectangular grid of streets was designed in 1718 by a French engineer, Adrien de Pauger, and has been left largely untouched. The elegant buildings have intricate filigree ironwork balconies, overflowing with greenery and delightfully cooed courtyards.

The Garden District, just a short ride away on the world's oldest continually operating street-car, exudes a stately atmosphere, no doubt

cultivated in the last century when sugar-rich New Orleans was the wealthiest city in the US. The impression of opulence is maintained by the fleets of stretch-limos that line the streets. The ante-bellum mansions are built in a style known as "Greek Revival", and boast more columns than Mount Olympus. The houses, surrounded by wrought-iron fences, mature magnolias and azaleas, are impressive.

The city's cemeteries - memorably showcased in *Easy Rider* - are also worth a visit. Known as "Cities of the Dead", they contain only above-ground tombs. The authorities in the early 1700s tried burying the dead underground, but as New Orleans is some five feet below sea-level - and kept dry only thanks to an elaborate pumping system - the graves just filled with water and the corpses floated away.

The stone mausoleums now act as natural crematoriums. In the mid-summer heat, the bodies contained within spontaneously combust. After a year and a day, the municipality opens the crypts, sweeps the remains to the back and places another body within.

The flipside of the city's vibrancy is violence. Horror stories tell of tourists being robbed in the cemeteries by muggers posing as graveside mourners. Even more shockingly, local urban legend has it that visitors can be grabbed out of a crowd and dooped, only to wake up later in a bath of ice with a note pinned to the chest saying: "Dial 911. One of your kidneys has been removed."

That said, staying within the tourist areas and seeking safety in numbers, the only danger we experienced was overdosing on an indigestible combination of knockout drinks, deep-fried food and saccharine Southern hospitality.

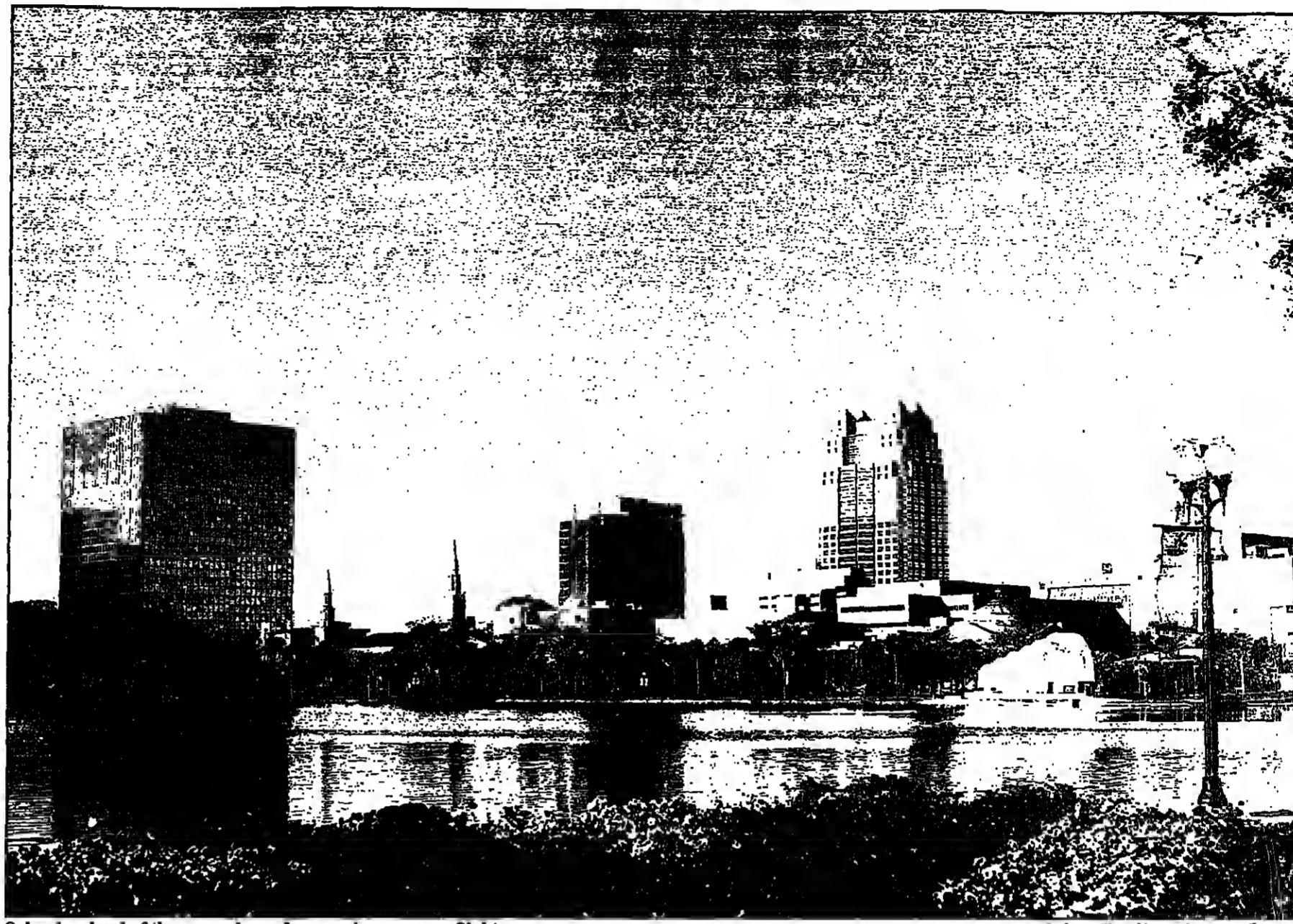
It is not a calming place to be. New Orleans famously never sleeps - there are no licensing laws - and a hotel room on Bourbon Street is as quiet as a rave.

However, a few intense, pleasure-seeking days should be sufficient to show you just why New Orleans is known as "The City That Care Forgot".

There are no direct flights from the UK to New Orleans and, because it is high season, fares are not cheap. *Quest Worldwide* (0181-546 6000) has a mid-week fare on Houston for £541 including tax, and *Travelbag* (01420 88380) has a mid-week fare on United for £609 including tax. Weekend fares are likely to be higher but all fares will come down in September.



The Big Easy: New Orleans will put a spell on you



Orlando - land of theme parks and expensive summer flights

Robert Harding Picture Library

Variations on a theme

How do you make a visit to Florida's theme parks appealing to both children and adults?

Guy de la Bédoyère has the answer

It does not take a parent long to work out that a number of coincidences turn up when planning holidays. Remarkably, flights to Orlando, in Florida, magically escalate in price around school holidays.

Under juvenile pressure to experience the Florida attractions, I decided to try a roundabout and cheaper route, partly because the prospect of several days in theme-park world was a bit grim. It is a happy fact that a credit card and a telephone make organising a holiday in the US ludicrously easy.

I started with the *Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World* (by Bob Sehlinger, Macmillan USA ISBN 0026066639, about £9.99 in the UK). This useful book not only provides detailed commentary on rides at most of the theme parks in the Orlando area, but also gives a graph of visitor attendance.

According to this book, the week that falls 23 weeks before Christmas is the one when fewest people crowd the theme parks. So we picked that one, even though it meant taking the children out of school early. It is not ideal, but we have a large family and the monumental cost difference makes it an inevitable solution.

My wife, who is a teacher, was unable to come at that crucial time of year so she stayed at home with our two youngest children, who had already been theme-parked in California.

Next, the flight. I flew with my two eldest sons (11 and 10) to Atlanta from Gatwick on British Airways. Total cost for the three of us was £618, a lot cheaper than flying direct into Orlando. The downside was the 450-mile drive into Florida.

In fact, that journey was tremendous. Driving that far in Britain is grim, but in the US 450 miles is no worse than 100 miles here. Having picked up a Hertz car (prebooked and prepaid in the UK) at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport, we stayed a night in an Econo Lodge motel at Atlanta and set out first thing on Interstate 75 for Macon, Georgia, a well-preserved ante-bellum town about 70 miles to the south east.

Macon meant a visit to the Hay House, a magnificent residence with original slave quarters and hideous late-19th-century decor. The Confederate government stored their gold here during the Civil War.

From Macon the I-75 was never

empty, but it was completely devoid of the congestion we had had to fight through on the M25 to Gatwick. Gradually the farmland gave way to tropical scenery - enormous views across lush green vegetation and a shimmering blue sky.

Crossing the state line is like passing into paradise. We pulled up at the Visitors' Center just over the line to be treated to free citrus drinks and acres of discount vouchers. That night we stopped at an Econo Lodge motel in Lake City, Florida, and in the morning woke to a crisp, sharp, misty dawn.

Leaving I-75 soon after Ocala we took the Florida Turnpike south east to Orlando. By now vast posters of the Terminator at Universal Studios had us almost witless with excitement. It is remarkable how the gradual approach was really making the journey seem like an achievement.

We reached Gatorland in Orlando by 11am. This is a slightly macabre entertainment, where alligators coast around in pools and their babies clamour over each other in tanks.

The gators looked content enough, but then they hadn't visit-

ed the shop where it became uncomfortable clear what happens to them. Any doubts are dispelled by the restaurant which serves various 'gator dishes'.

It wasn't far to our hotel, the Best Western, in Kissimmee, near Orlando, which I had booked months before simply by looking through brochures in travel agencies to find one suitable for children. We ended up with a ground-floor room with the usual television, fridge and bathroom. It is a modest but perfectly functional establishment with a restaurant and pools.

The first major trip was east to Cape Canaveral. Ever since I was a child the prospect of seeing this amazing place, miles out among the lagoons and islands of eastern Florida, had filled me with awe. Out in the grasslands the launch pads sit like vast, ancient monuments, miles apart and stretching for more miles along the coast.

We took the coach ride out to Pad 33a where the Shuttle Atlantis was waiting to be launched. On the way we passed the colossal Vehicle Assembly Building, which would house several cathedrals and a couple of pyramids, should anyone

fancy using it for that. The children were thrilled by the monumentality of it all.

As for the theme parks - well, you have heard it all before. But in the week we had picked we waited hardly a moment. At Disney MGM the boys had been on *Star Tours* (the *Star Wars* ride) three times before it was 10am and for the rest of the day we piled in and out of every ride there was.

The odd thing was that MGM, and all the other theme parks, appeared to be full, so bow anyone

comes with the place on the "full" weeks, I cannot imagine.

It is a miracle that an entertainment such as Muppet 3-D Vision manages to be completely vacuous, totally inoffensive and utterly compelling all at the same time.

At Disney's Magic Kingdom, Alien Encounter involves an insane demonstration of teleportation. Naturally it all goes horribly wrong and a vile alien which looks like a 12ft cockroach appears. Lights go out and panicky (recorded) screaming indicates that the alien has escaped. A noise of scurrying leaves every guest in no doubt that the alien is behind him or her. This con-

clusion is confirmed by a blast of hot air and a spray of cold water on the back of the neck.

Laugh? I was laughing and screaming at the same time, which was no mean feat.

But the climax was the Terminator 3-D experience at Universal. It was quite simply the most entertaining 15 minutes of my adult life, and the kids were left hoarse with screaming and excitement.

The downside to our little scheme started showing three days before we were due to head back to Atlanta. It started getting very very cold. An expected front was pumping down across the US and it was snowing in the Florida panhandle.

We left a day early and drove up Florida's east coast along I-95 to dodge the approaching front and cross back into Georgia to spend a night in Savannah.

Savannah is supposed to be a real "purty" place but as we were sliced in two when we got out of the car it was an attraction we were able to live without. I have never experienced such bone-cracking cold.

The front passed over during the night and we woke to a crystal-clear morning. The drive west to Atlanta along I-16 and I-75 was straightforward but the utter stillness, the burning sun and chilled air created mirages on the Interstates.

Near Macon once more, we took a look at the Ocmulgee National Monument, which is a healthy reminder to our European pompousists that there was life in North America before we arrived. This was a centre of the Mississippian culture, which farmed and built temple chambers in large artificial mounds at the same time as the Anglo-Saxons were scuttling away from William the Conqueror. In the 17th century it became a trading post where Creek Indians dealt with the English.

The extra day gave us a chance to explore Atlanta before flying home. At street level almost everyone was black and poor. Then we took the lift down to "Atlanta Underground".

Magically, everyone in the underground beated shopping mall was white (except some shop assistants) and affluent. The boys were transfixed, and horrified.

We arrived at the airport early and took refuge in the controlled, clean environment. It took quite a lot of the edge off the trip, but at least you could say that our holiday in theme-park Florida had also been an education.

TRAVEL FACTS

GETTING THERE: partly because Laker Airways stopped flying from Gatwick to Florida earlier this year, plane seats to the Sunshine State are scarce. British Airways (0345 222111) and Virgin Atlantic (01293 747747) fly non-stop from Heathrow to Miami and Gatwick to Orlando; American Airlines (0345 789789) operates from Heathrow and Gatwick to Miami. The lowest fares are likely to be available through discount agents. Connections from other UK airports to assorted US cities are widely available. The low-cost route to Orlando on Icelandair from Heathrow or Glasgow via Reykjavik, sold through agents such as Airline Network

(0800 727747) is excellent value but heavily booked this summer. In addition to these scheduled services, there are plenty of charters from Gatwick, Manchester and other UK airports to Sanford, north of Orlando.

Getting around: renting a car is most sensibly done in advance, at an all-inclusive rate, through a travel agent. The best plan is to book a sub-compact car and resist all invitations to pay for an upgrade - you will probably get one anyway.

Accommodation: Econo Lodges can be booked in the UK through Choice Hotels International on 0800 444444; Best Western hotels

can be booked in the UK, on 0800 393130.

More information: the United States no longer has a tourist office in London, so start by calling the Florida Tourism Information Service (a premium rate number, 0891 600555). For more specific information try the following: Miami (01444 250048); the Florida Keys (01564 794555); Palm Beach (0181-681 7762); Marco Island (0800 891411); Naples (0800 962122); Orlando (0891 600220); St Petersburg/Clearwater (0181-651 4742); and Kissimmee (0171-630 1105). To pronounce Kissimmee, treat the first syllable as a "ker" and stress the second: Ker-SIM-ee should do the trick.

GREEN CHANNEL

IF YOU want to learn about the world, educate yourself, have a good time, but still be home for tea, the Natural History Museum's four new galleries that opened this week may be the place to go. Bringing to life the history of the planet, are four new exhibitions: "From the beginning", "Earth's treasury", "Earth today" and "Earth Lab". These tell the Earth's story, starting with the big bang and the birth of the universe and travelling through the vast

expanse of geological time with the use of ultraviolet graphics, a giant egg timer, a crystal ball and mirror reflections into eternity. On the way, you will come across a rare cluster of crystallised cubic crystals of gold from Australia; a piece of Alexandrite named after the Tsar of Russia, which shows the two colours of imperial Russia - green and deep red, depending on whether it is natural or artificial light; fine crystals of emerald from

Colombia; a 4,560-million-year-old meteorite that landed in Allende, Mexico, which is studded with interstellar diamonds containing gases from stars that were around before our solar system even existed; and rock from the Moon and Mars.

At the end of the galleries, you get a glimpse into the future and what it may hold for the planet - including the difficult and topical issue of how we are going to cope with the empty water bottles,

fizzy drinks cans and other waste products that we are all busily creating as a legacy for the next generation.

Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London (0171-938 9123). Open 10am-5.50pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5.50pm Sun. £6 adults, £3 children 5-17, under-fives free, concessions £3.20. Family tickets £16.

SUE WHEAT

RED CHANNEL

New warnings about Greece published this week by the US State Department.

CRIME AGAINST tourists (purses, snatchings, pickpocketing) appears to be on the rise at popular tourist sites and on crowded public transport, particularly in Athens. The usual safety precautions taken when in any urban area ought to be practised during a visit to Greece.

Strikes in the transport sector (national airline, city bus lines, and taxis) occur with some frequency. Most are announced in advance and are usually of short duration.

Visitors to Greece must be prepared to drive defensively. Heavy traffic and highway inadequacies pose hazards, especially at night. Take extreme care when riding a motorbike. Penalties for possession, use, and trafficking in illegal drugs

are strict; convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and fines. Those arrested may spend up to 18 months in pre-trial confinement.

Removing antiquities, including rocks, from any archaeological sites in the country, is forbidden.

To subscribe to State Department briefings, send an e-mail containing the word "subscribe" to travel-advisories-request@stolof.edu

TRAVEL

48 HOURS IN THE ALGARVE 25 • LURE OF THE DEEP IN KENYA 26

Awash with elephants

India's Sonepur Mela is more than a religious festival – it's the largest livestock fair in the world. By Chris Caldico

The trouble with India," said Mr Sharma, "is that those without weight are always trying to throw weight around." These were his opening words as I took my reserved seat on the overnight train to Patna.

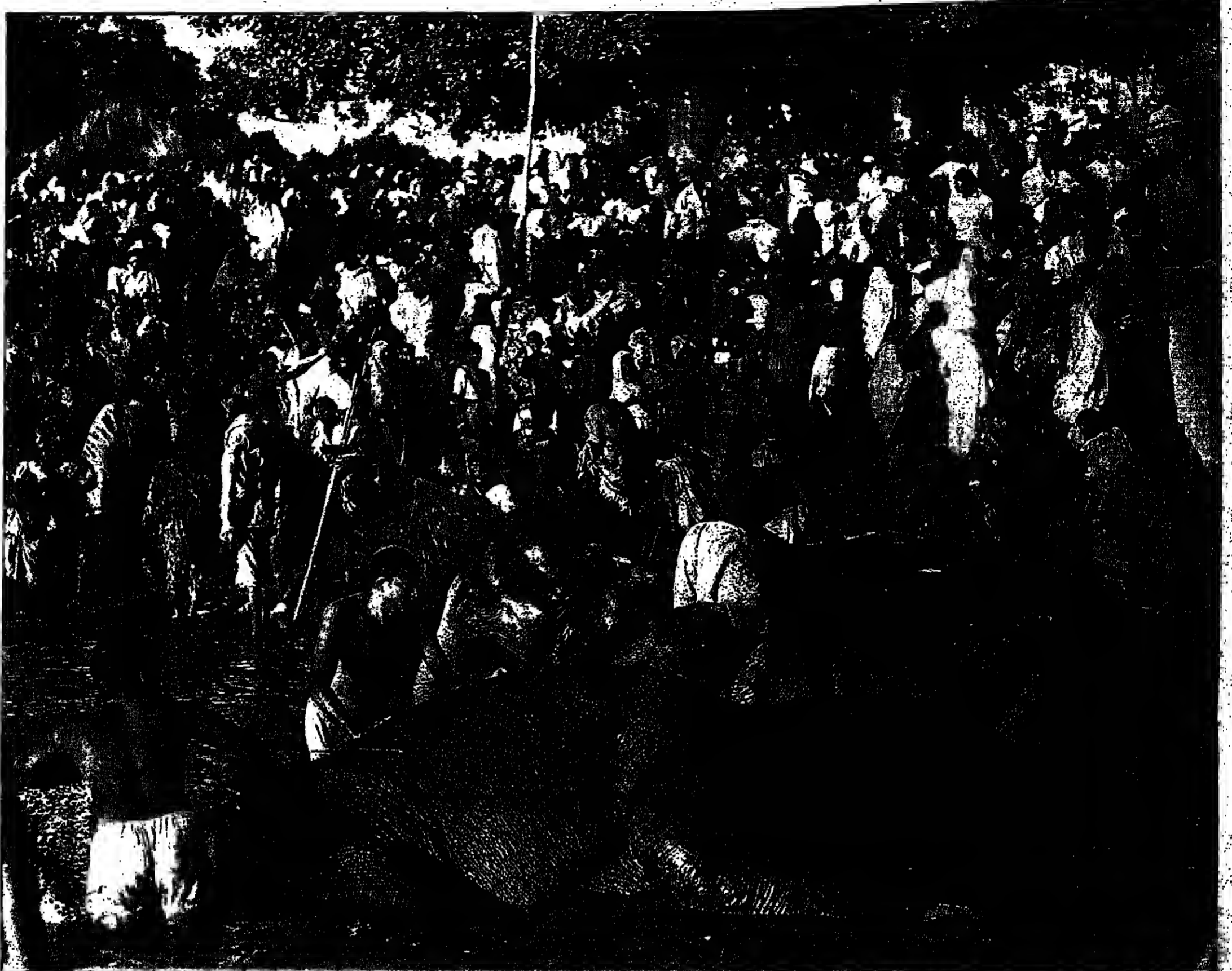
They were a vague reference to the volatile chaos minutes before a train departure anywhere in India, as argument about ownership of seats and placement of luggage becomes animated.

Soon after the train glided out of New Delhi station, Mr Sharma and a conductor became engaged in an altercation concerning the former's sizeable trunk which, placed next to his seat, was blocking the gangway. At a point where they both seemed close to physical violence, Mr Sharma turned to me and in calm, polite English declared: "This fellow is such a weightless man and I am telling him in no uncertain terms to bugger off." Some armed railway police arrived and immediately sided with the conductor. Mr Sharma, defeated, dragged his trunk to the end of the carriage. When he returned to his seat I suggested that the armed police seemed to have plenty of weight to throw around. "They are indeed fish from a very different kettle," he agreed.

Patna is the capital of Bihar, one of India's poorest, most densely crowded and unloved states. As a wealthy Punjabi businessman, Mr Sharma had a fear and loathing of the place. As night fell he warned that sleep would be foolish, and said that our only chance of surviving a journey through Bihar at night was extreme vigilance. His tales of armed gangs of dacoits roaming the countryside, robbing whole trains and buses, unafraid of the police, who themselves were corrupt, did not encourage easy sleep.

Still, I had good reason for being in Patna. I was en route to the annual Sonepur Mela, the biggest event in the Bihar calendar, the largest livestock fair in the world, which attracts millions of pilgrims and traders. Their main purpose is to celebrate the divine intervention of Lord Krishna who, in Hindu mythology, arrived here to slay a crocodile that was attacking an elephant.

Today elephants are the centrepiece of the livestock fair, despite being vastly outnumbered by horses, cattle and people. The 100 or so that turn up to be sold enjoy regal status. The sellers occupy the choicest spots of the fair, among the shaded avenues of the biggest trees closest to the river. These encampments often have an air of feudal grandeur. They are guarded by gun-toting men, populated by proud mahouts and their lean assistants in ragged loincloths, and overseen by portly zamindars who, as wealthy landlords, can deal in the sort of sums for which elephants change hands. These figures can easily exceed £10,000.



Above, Sonepur Mela Bihar; below, an elephant in Haathi Basara being decorated for selling

Chris Caldico

Such highly priced goods require not only serious guarding but also a considerable amount of pampering. Elephants love to be pampered. Apart from almost constant feeding, each animal needs to be scrubbed, decorated and given daily treats.

The treats of jaggery, a raw sugar fudge, are greedily consumed, often as bribes to encourage co-operation. And good behaviour is very important. Manipulating a 10-ton beast, capable of accidental bodily harm to anyone getting too close, requires skill. This challenge is at its most demanding on the morning fol-

lowing the full moon, when the spiritual festivities are at their height.

To pay correct homage the pilgrims are required to immerse themselves in the Gandak, then to change into fresh clothes and carry a vessel of river water up to the temple in Sonepur village. The scale on which this happens does not allow much room for dozens of elephants who, oblivious to divine merit, are as eager as ever for a long cooling drink and a cleansing frolic in the same shallow water most convenient for ritual bathing. Space has to be found.

A flimsy-looking bamboo structure is erected in an attempt to define an area re-

served for the elephants' ablutions. Despite a general capacity for tolerance and good nature, occasionally an elephant has enough of good behaviour. A young bull, possibly unimpressed with his jaggery ration, broke through the bamboo with a splitting crack and made a bid for freedom. For the next hour, to the great amusement of the crowd and the embarrassment of the mahouts pumming furiously up and down the river in a little boat, the miscreant escaped capture with a series of evasive moves as dexterous as those of a synchronised swimmer. Each victorious dodge was celebrated with a raised trunk and defiant trumpeting. Mercifully, such behaviour is rare on land, where an out-of-control elephant could mow down pilgrims on a devastating scale. Any hint of elephant ill temper still causes a panicked surge of humanity.

Surging humanity is very much part of the day at the Sonepur temple. As they arrive up from the Gandak, pilgrims are segregated by sex, then moved through a series of pens closer and closer to the temple doors. The pens are separated by tree-trunk-size logs that the guards raise to allow controlled passage of the excited multitudes – whose volume of religious fervour reaches a climax as their turn comes to stream into the inner sanctum. Once in-

side they fight forward in a merciless scramble. The long journey through Bihar, the long night of prayer, the near-impossible logistics of bathing and changing, the hours of discomfort and waiting in the pens – all for this one moment.

Meanwhile, the sideshows at Sonepur Mela provide light relief. Fine horses are galloped along dust tracks through the splintered sunlight among the trees. The riders look like characters from the Arabian Nights, with their twirling moustaches and colourful handannas. There are stalls selling singing birds, tropical plants, pyramids of spices and coloured powders, pots and pans, intriguing kitchen implements, hand-made toys and serious agricultural machinery.

There is also raunchy night-life, distorted, loud film music and mischievous-sounding announcements to lure men into marquees offering the dubious pleasures of "Bombay style go-go girls".

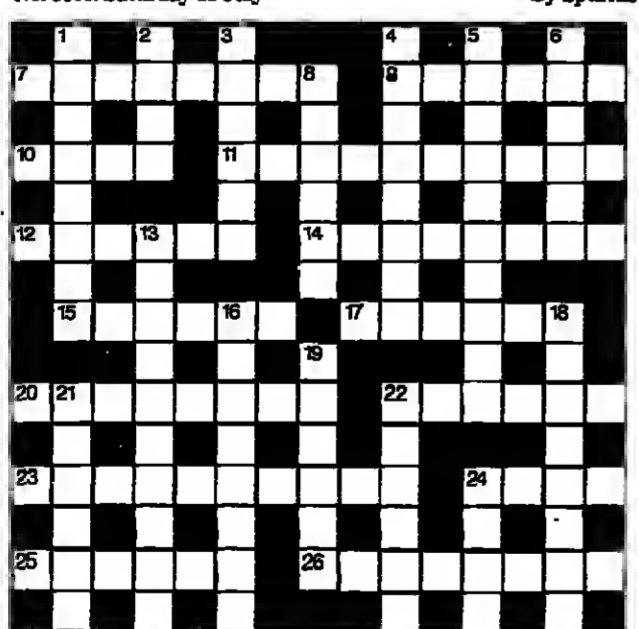
I never saw any sign of drunken violence, or intimidating gangs of disaffected youth. In fact I was unaware of any danger beyond the dare-devil motorcycle shows, which were truly alarming. The most suffering I saw was self-inflicted, by holy men lying on beds of thorn bushes hoping to attract sponsorship from passers-by. Being a foreign tourist at Sonepur Mela is still a novelty and

a privilege. Despite the reputation of Bihar, I found no fear; only hospitality, smiles and polite intrigue. Mr Sharma's warnings seemed quite out of place here, although I am sure they were well meant. Yet it is possible that the Mela crowds had simply left their troubles of everyday life in suspension, and just allowed themselves to become lost in the fun of the fair. I know I did.

THE SATURDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3666, Saturday 18 July

By Spurious



Friday's solution

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K I E C E O L S
SAND PUITY TYP
U G M S U A N
PROGRESS MASCARA
N C S M
PRETENSE HEALING
O S O E A N E O
LINK AGONY FRAUD
E E D R O S R K
CARRY CONVICTION
A V E O E A E O
THEOREM REINFORCE

Last Saturday's solution

R V P S A C
COLOSSAL GOOPON
S P E Y A C R
EDICT IMMATURE
W T N I A
BOARDING SCHOOL
O E N A N
DOSAGE DEFEND
E U E E R
H T E E C
CONSPIRATORIAL
H T E E C
COMMUNAL ROACH
P E E I T V M
SPINNET SCALEPAN
V T T H R S

ACROSS

- 7 Scholars one meets time and time and time again in centre of Carlisle (8)
- 9 Cause to argue (6)
- 10 Bit of pique around following quarrel? (4)
- 11 Local custom cherished by home worker (10)
- 12 A pupil's put in cereal – the wrong way to make a cake (6)
- 14 Local authority? Sometimes (8)
- 15 Bribe from tiresome individual almost accepted by star (6)
- 17 Tree found in waste land around Missouri (6)
- 20 Hoplessly lost, dear? You need a guiding light (8)
- 22 It's wise to follow the same medication regime (6)
- 23 Creativity evident in designer frames? (7,3)
- 24 Taunt reflecting elements of incorrigible bigotry (4)
- 25 Stick to line in pale colour (6)
- 26 Establishment associated with Latin American stock market (8)

DOWN

- 1 Bush is one growing wild around Cape, yielding bright flower (8)
- 2 Bank official accepts Euro (4)
- 3 Artist requiring support for arm – it has some point (6)
- 4 Rabbit featured in legal proceedings in court (8)
- 5 Gasp when eccentric person enters in breeches (10)
- 6 Commander (Royal Navy) monarch's put in a difficult position (6)
- 8 Draw inspiration from miraculous healing, for the most part (6)
- 13 For shortening, use margin? (10)
- 16 Subject to value-judgement? (8)
- 18 General factotum disposing of King Charles' mortal remains? (8)
- 19 Runs into attractive girl giving lecture (6)
- 21 Issue people have left alone lately? (6)
- 22 Take off hated Conservative leader in burlesque (6)
- 24 Single expected to be cut – song from The Minstrels (4)

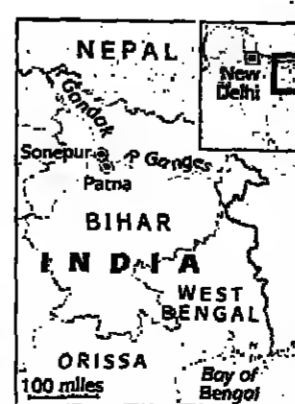
The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardback copies of... Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: R. Foll, Wirral; J. Williams, London W9; M. Smith, Canarforth; S. Wallace, Bristol; J. Williams, Shrewsbury.

FACT FILE

When to go: start planning now for an autumn trip to India. The next Sonepur Mela festival and livestock fair starts on the full moon around 4 November.

Getting there: there are plenty of cheap fares to choose from on indirect routes to Delhi. For non-stop flights, Welcome Travel (0171-439 3627) has reasonable fares from Heathrow on Air India.

From Delhi, there are good train connections to Patna. The journey takes about 12 hours. Flights there are inexpensive, some as little as £60. Seats on planes are easy to reserve (so few people want to go there) but rail



the holiest of Sikh shrines). But if your time is short you can continue straight from Patna to the Mela area by taxi directly from the station or airport. And before you set off, bear in mind that the taxi fares are highly negotiable.

Accommodation: in Patna itself, the Hotel Maurya Patna has rooms in the region of £40 per night. These offer such luxuries as air-conditioning and a swimming-pool, but there are many other cheaper places.

Meanwhile, accommodation on the Mela site is provided by the Government of Bihar Department of Tourism, in large, colonial-style tents.

Every effort is made to make guests feel welcome. There are private outdoor showers and flush toilets behind each tent, while inside there are mosquito nets and bedroom furniture. And there are added extras such as little front gardens complete with plastic pot plants and easy chairs. Good meals are available at the site, and there's even a security guard. The tariffs are surprisingly low – you can book through the tourist office at Hotel Kautilya Vihar in Beer Chand Patel Road, Patna.

More information: contact the Indian Government Tourist Office, 7 Cork Street, London W1X 2LN (0171-437 3877).

YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

PERSONAL FINANCE • MOTORING • PROPERTY

The cost of breaking-up

It may be the Nineties, but unmarried couples are still in the dark ages in the event of a split. Paul Slade looks for light at the end of the tunnel

There is little social stigma attached to living together outside marriage these days. But unmarried couples are still financially discriminated against on everything from property to pensions.

English law recognises marriage as a special state, and gives married couples a whole range of tax breaks and legal rights as a result. And yet a couple can live together unmarried for 20 years, raise a happy family, and - in the eyes of the law - remain little more than flatmates.

It is the economically weaker partner in an unmarried couple who suffers. In practice, this is almost always the woman. Unmarried women have fewer property and pension rights than their married counterparts, and are often left high and dry when their partner dies.

Anna Rowland of The Law Society says: "You can make provisions for all these things if you're living together, but you have to go out of your way to do it. If you don't, then you have very few rights."

It is often when the couple splits up that problems arise. The most valuable item shared by the couple is usually the house where they have lived. In the case of a married couple, the house will be thrown into a central pool of assets, which is then shared out between husband and wife, either by agreement or as the courts dictate.

But where an unmarried couple is involved, the first assumption is that the house belongs entirely to whoever's name is on the deeds. The other partner will get a share of its value only if he or she can prove they made a very substantial contribution to its cost of purchase or upkeep.

Rowland says: "It would have to be clear evidence of a major financial contribution to the property. If the couple had a huge refurbishment, and it came to £30,000 and you paid for it, that would be taken into account. But a bit of paying the bills here and there won't do it." The answer here may be to ensure that the house you share is held in joint names.

The next biggest item to consider is the main breadwinner's pension fund. Pensions which offer dependants' benefits will automatically pay out to a spouse if the holder should die before drawing the fund. The picture for unmarried partners is far more precarious.

The first problem is that the pension scheme's rules may not allow for dependants' benefits to be paid to an unmarried partner. But, even if the rules allow this, the scheme's trustees could still bar payment.

John Glendenning of Scottish Amicable says: "It's a matter of what the trustees' attitude towards unmarried partners is. If you were married, then the trustees really have no option but to pay you that pension. If you weren't married, then they take a view as to whether or not they want to pay you."

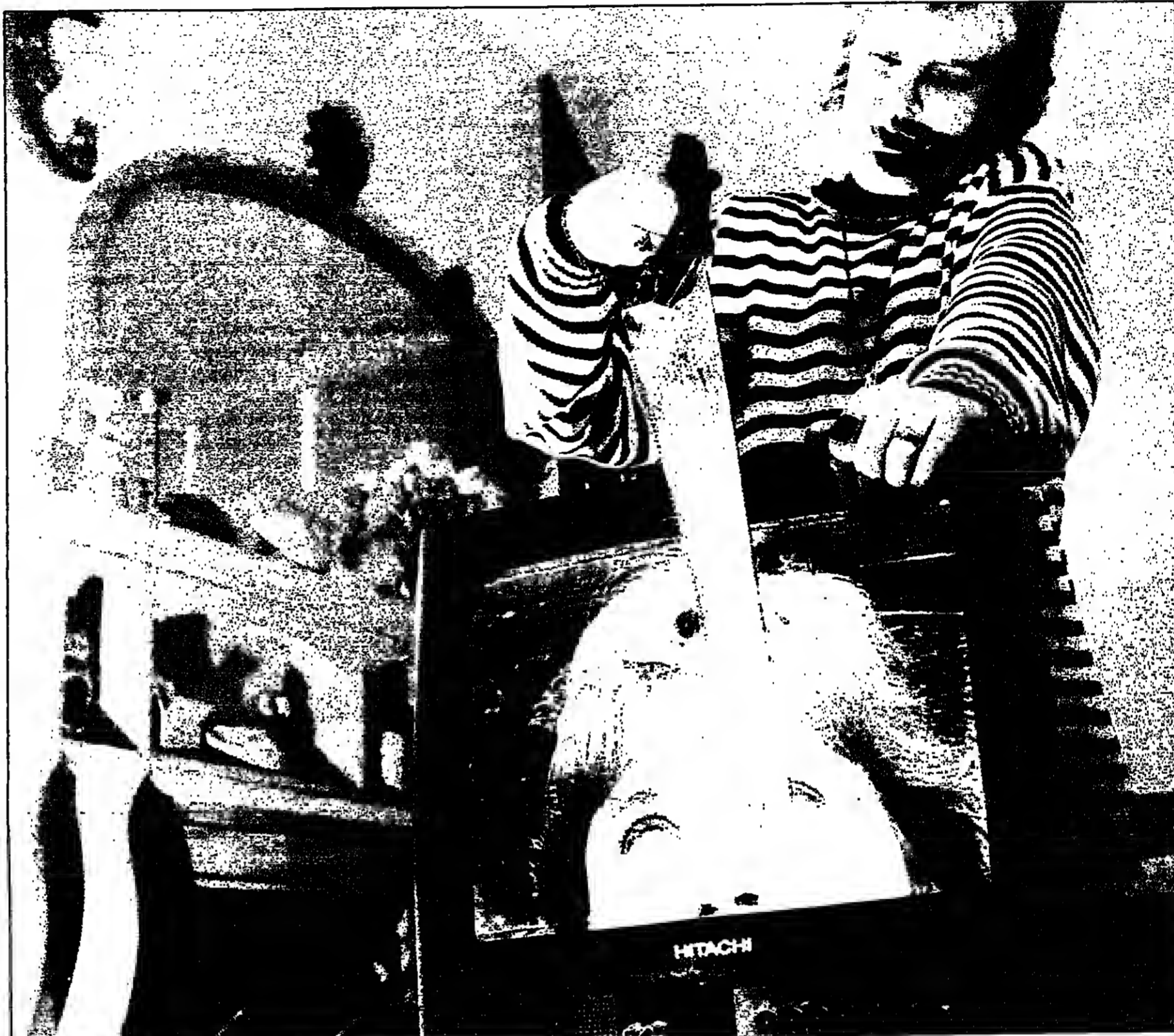
The only solution here is to check before buying a pension just what the scheme's policy is. But even this does not offer a watertight guarantee, as it is always possible that the trustees will take a perverse decision. The danger of non-payment applies to workplace and personal pensions.

Next we come to what happens if your partner dies without a will, as about one in three people do.

If a husband or wife dies intestate, their surviving spouse will get the first £125,000 of the estate, plus half of any sum remaining. The rest goes to any children from the marriage. If there are no children, the spouse gets the first £200,000 plus half the rest. In this case, anything left over goes to other relatives.

Without a will, surviving partners will find themselves frozen out. Unless they can prove they were more or less entirely dependent on the deceased, they get nothing.

The tax system, too, gives preferential treatment to married people. Just by getting married, a couple takes an extra £1,900 of their annual income out of tax, thanks to the married couples' allowance. Transfers on death are free of inheritance tax when made from one spouse to the other, but an unmarried partner will lose up to 40 per cent of their legacy in tax if the estate is worth more than £233,000.



Dividing the spoils can be difficult when unmarried partners go their separate ways.

John Lawrence

WHERE CO-HABITEES STAND IN THE LAW

THE FINANCIAL rewards of marriage are considerable, but they are enjoyed by fewer people each year.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show there were 358,567 marriages in 1971, but only 283,012 in 1996, a fall of 21 per cent.

In comparison, the number of divorces climbed by 58 per cent over the same period, rising from 11,917

in 1971 to 173,966 in 1995.

The Government has hinted that it is sympathetic to the view that married couples and co-habitees should be put on a more equal footing. But the only firm action so far is the recent announcement that unmarried fathers are to be given automatic parental rights.

The Government's pension-split-

ting proposals should make it possible for the courts to divide the main breadwinner's pension fund 50-50 on divorce. But the proposals as they stand ignore co-habiting couples.

The Law Commission is going to publish a report on property rights for co-habiting couples next year, which may prompt further changes to the law.

Paying the price of topping-up

Some in-house pension schemes can cost savers dearly in management charges. By Nic Cicutti

TENS OF thousands of savers may be receiving a poor deal from their in-house pension top-up schemes, with some managers' charges costing more than the funds' performance is likely to deliver, a survey reveals.

The survey, from pensions and benefits consultancy Watson Wyatt, shows that charges levied on the plans, called AVCs, range from 0.6 per cent a year on with-profits funds with contributions of £25 a month over a five-year period, to a massive 9.7 per cent. The average is a 3.9 per cent reduction in the annual value of a fund over its lifetime. Costs decrease depending on the amount paid in and the length of time the funds are left invested.

Among the most expensive AVC providers over a five-year period are some of the

UK's biggest insurers, including Norwich Union, Guardian, Royal & Sun Alliance, Scottish Mutual, and Scottish Equitable.

Watson Wyatt's researchers also found that three-year returns from many providers was below that offered by building society savings accounts.

In a few cases, the effect of charges meant that returns from some funds were less than the amount paid in by AVC savers - for which the survey pins the fault squarely on the charges levied on the schemes.

One contract provided by Scottish Mutual, a subsidiary of Abbey National, returned a loss of 7.6 per cent.

Although this contract has

now been replaced by one more advantageous to policyholders, it is still being used by some schemes.

AVCs are offered to company employees as a means of boosting their retirement income if they feel the occupational schemes they belong to will not ensure them a large enough pension. Insurance companies, in the main, tender to run the AVC schemes, into which members' contributions are paid. Generally, the funds built up in the individual's AVC fund are used to buy an annuity to run alongside the main pension.

Research published in *The Independent* last week showed that in-house AVC schemes

usually offer better value than private versions - known as FSAVCs - available from insurance companies. This is partly because employers will generally pay for the cost of an AVC scheme on behalf of staff who pay into one.

But not all companies do this and the extent to which they are prepared to do this also varies, leaving some AVC scheme members to shoulder a potentially significant portion of these costs.

Andy Parker, principal in Watson Wyatt's financial services division, says: "Due to greater competition, many providers have changed their AVC contracts, but these im-

prove do not necessarily apply to existing schemes.

"Our findings on charges and performance show that trustees (of pension schemes) can take nothing for granted and they have an increasingly difficult task in choosing the most appropriate scheme provider for their members."

"This task is made more difficult due to the increasing complexity in the marketplace and the potential FSAVC mis-selling issue."

The Watson Wyatt report predicts that in future AVCs will be seen as a medium to long-term investment rather than a last-minute pension top-up option.

But it also argues that pension scheme trustees need to be far more aware of the cost implications of choosing providers.

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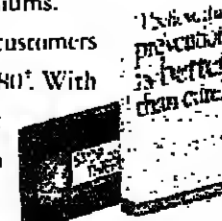
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INSIDE

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*Based on Prudential Direct new customer research up to March 1998. Lines are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm Saturday and 10am to 5pm Sunday. For your protection, calls on this number will be recorded. Please note in some cases we may not be able to provide a quotation.

First step on the ladder

FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

NAME: TIM BRIDGER AGE: 24 OCCUPATION: ESTATE AGENT



**NIC
CICUTTI**

*'Be wary of making
claims without
evidence': it's worth
tattooing on my body*

their contributions.

Another thought is that, as Watson Wyatt points out, it is up to pension fund trustees to obtain the best possible deal for their members - and that doesn't just mean the main pension but also the subsidiary AVC scheme. This is particularly so if employers don't meet most or all of the bill.

Finally, irrespective of whether these are in-house or private top-ups, those who gain the most are the insurance companies who market them to punters. How unusual.

Rather than deal with each letter, let me offer some proof. Banks and building societies both publish annual reports. These show their "margins", the difference between interest received on mortgages and that paid out to customers on savings. Lower margins are generally better for customers.

Recent figures I have seen show the interest margin for the Halifax is 2.48 per cent, 2.28 per cent at Abbey National, 2.22 per cent at the Woolwich and 2.03 per cent at Alliance & Leicester. By contrast, the interest margin at Nationwide is 1.49 per cent, 1.22 per cent at Bradford & Bingley and 1.2 per cent at Yorkshire and Coventry building societies. I rest my case.

Tim's priority is to purchase a property in about six months' time. He has saved up some money to go towards a deposit and associated moving costs. But he feels he needs guidance in this area and wants a general financial check-up. The questions he needs help with involve finding the right loan for his future needs and deciding on the best way to pay it off.

The Adviser: Martha Catterall is an independent financial adviser at City Independent, based in central London. The firm is a member of the DBS IFA network. (0171 528 0092)

The Advice: Tim has sensibly saved £2,000, which is on deposit with the Nationwide in a basic savings account, paying him 4.4 per cent gross.

He could move this to the society's Postal Account and receive 7.3 per cent gross. Alternatively, Cheltenham & Gloucester will give him 7.5 per cent for an Instant Access Account, although a switch now might make Tim ineligible for free shares or cash should Nationwide's members vote to de-mutualise later this month.

Tim's basic salary is £14,000, with a further £7,000 to £9,000 per year earned from bonuses and commissions.

In terms of borrowing capacity, lenders will generally include 50 per cent of bonus or commissions if these can be shown to be regular. Tim's borrowing limit will therefore be £49,000 (calculated using only his salary and on a 3.5 times basic salary), or £53,000 if one takes into account 50 per cent of non-salaried earnings. Based on a 5 per cent deposit, this means that Tim's purchase price will range from £52,000 to £66,250.

It is also advisable that he save a further £1,000 in addition to his 5 per cent deposit for associated costs, such as solicitors' fees, survey fees (these can sometimes be paid for by the lender) moving and new furniture costs. A further point to bear in mind is that it would be preferable for Tim to buy at a purchase price of less than £60,000 as he would then avoid a further cost, stamp duty,



Tim Bridger: rather than just selling properties, he would like to own one himself

Neville Elder

which is 1 per cent of the purchase price at that level.

Once Tim is confident of having enough capital for the deposit and associated costs, he must find a property and put in an offer. He must then decide what kind of mortgage best suits him. With an interest-only loan no capital is paid off. This means a separate investment product has to be started, with the aim of paying off the loan in some years' time. Repayment loans involve paying a mixture of capital and interest

each month. Opting for one over another depends largely on how long Tim feels he will live at the property. Being young and on his first property purchase, it is unlikely that he will stay there more than five years. With a repayment mortgage you pay mostly interest in the first five years so, should Tim move within that time period he may find he has paid off very little of his capital.

If Tim feels it is likely that he will be there less than five years, then an interest-only

mortgage would be more appropriate as the capital repayment vehicle is portable.

Regarding the interest deal, if it is important to know what the payments are each month, or he feels interest rates may rise in the next few years, a fixed interest rate would be suitable.

However, if Tim believes rates will come down or wants to pay as little as possible initially, I would suggest a discounted variable rate, cutting the cost of the loan for an initial

period, or a capped rate which would put limits on the possible increases and decreases in rates.

Most lenders want the borrower to invest in life cover to cover the loan. Tim is single, with no financial dependants and therefore if his lender does not insist on life cover then he may decide not to take it.

On the other hand, critical illness cover, whilst not insisted upon by lenders, is very relevant for Tim. If he were diagnosed with a critical condition,

such as cancer, or suffer a heart attack, Tim would at least be able to pay off his mortgage. Given that men have a one in four chance of being diagnosed with a critical illness before the age of 65 years, this cover is valuable, relevant and inexpensive at his age (he does smoke, however, which will increase premiums).

Cover of £50,000 over 25 years including waiver of premium in the event of not being able to do his own job, will cost Tim £15.62 a month with Scottish Provident.

An income replacement policy is also advisable as his employer does not offer any such benefit: this can provide up to 60 per cent of one's basic salary tax free if unable to work due to accident or illness. Cover of £700 per month, index-linked, with a deferred period of three months to age 60 years, would cost Tim £12.02 a month with Norwich Union. Rates are reviewable every five years.

Tim does not have any investments and although he is keen to save, this is a luxury he cannot afford at the present time. Once he has his property and has adapted to the new monthly commitment, that is the time to look at investment planning.

With his previous employer Tim was a member of a group pension scheme with the insurer NPL. He has since been advised to transfer this money (£3,000) to Equitable Life and is contributing £50 per month into an Equitable Life personal pension. Equitable Life has good overall fund performance and a perfectly good contract but will only offer waiver of premium to Tim's contract if he has some form of income replacement policy in place. He should act immediately.

Waiver of premium ensures that if you are unable to work due to an accident or illness the provider will pay contributions until you recover or until your stated retirement date.

One final point: £50 a month contribution represents 4.3 per cent of Tim's salary and only 2.6 per cent of his earnings. He should be looking to contribute at the very least 6 per cent in order to ensure a decent retirement income.

SPOTLIGHT

MORGAN STANLEY DEAN WITTER

The product: Morgan Stanley Dean Witter's No-Load Funds.

The deal: invest at least £5,000 (or at least £1,000 before the end of the year) in one of three investment funds run by Morgan Stanley's fund managers. Unlike most unit trusts there is no initial charge - and no charge for taking money out early.

Plus points: most unit trusts charge at least 5 per cent upfront - much of which goes to pay sales costs - by levying an initial charge or a bid/offer spread. Morgan Stanley instead wants customers to cut out the middle man - the financial adviser - and go straight to them by telephone.

Morgan Stanley would have us believe this is just what the UK needs. If we wanted to be like the Americans, 40 per cent of us would put our money in investment funds. We would save more in investment funds than in bank deposits.

The bank also points to the desire of more than half of us to buy investment funds direct rather than paying indirectly for expensive sales advice. By selling direct, Morgan Stanley can charge at

least a third less than the average unit trust.

Take a £5,000 investment held for five years. Assuming the investment performance is equal, the average UK unit trust would cost £836 in charges (yes, really) against £566 for the average Morgan Stanley Fund.

On top of that Morgan Stanley has cut out all exit charges. Take money out after a year of investment growth and the only deduction will be a 1.6 per cent fund management fee.

What of the three funds - classed as Global Equity, Continental Equity and UK Growth and Income? Morgan Stanley's investment record is also classy. Over five years its global equity fund has outperformed the MSCI world index of leading shares, clocking up annual growth of 21 per cent - against 15 per cent for the index.

Drawbacks and risks: good idea, guys, but it's already been done. No-load funds are already common if you are happy to invest in tracker funds - funds which mimic the performance of the FTSE 100 or the Nikkei.

It is not even a breakthrough for ac-

tive fund management at cheaper prices. Legal & General has been running no-load funds for two years. And L&G's investment management is cheaper, if only slightly. Morgan Stanley charges 1.6 per cent; L&G charges 1.5. L&G also offers more pedestrian funds, such as its Fixed Interest Trust, which only costs 1 per cent a year.

Having said that, L&G does insist on penalising investors if they take their money out early. Stop after a year and the charge is 3 per cent.

Morgan Stanley lacks a track record for its UK Growth and Equity fund. It has managed money for institutional investors, where it is well regarded. But it is best known for its global fund management. When the London stock exchange behaves differently from Wall Street, UK managers may be best placed to spot it.

Verdict: like most things American, it is unoriginal but you get more bangs for your buck.

Marks out of five: four

ANDREW VERITY

BARGAIN BASEMENT

RB5 ADVANTA is launching an annual travel insurance policy aimed at its 700,000 customers. The cover offers a European option, costing from £59.95 and a worldwide one, priced at £94.95. Call 0870 9030030.

ABBEY LIFE is launching a Final Countdown PEP offer with a discount of up to 50 per cent on its usual initial charges up to the April 1999 deadline when Individual Savings Accounts are introduced. Discounts range from 3 per cent for lump sum deposits of up to £5,180 (including charges), to 1 per cent on investments between £1,000 and £2,999. Abbey Life has four PEPs: Extra Income, Global Opportunities, Dividend & Growth and Managed Income. Call 01202 407404.

LIVERPOOL & VICTORIA Friendly is offering a personal loan with rates from 13.3 per cent APR on borrowings of £500. Call 0800 134134.

NEWCASTLE BUILDING Society is launching Nova 18 for young people aged up to 18. The account which can be opened with £1, pays 6 per cent gross. Savers with balances of £1,000 or more

on 1 December will receive a £10 gift voucher. Call 0191 2442244.

SCOTTISH LIFE International is launching a five-year Income Bonus Bond paying a fixed income of 9 per cent net of basic rate tax. The bond offers options ranging from early repayment of capital after three or four years, a capital safety net or full capital repayment plus income. Call John Allison on 0131 456 6071.

SAINSBURY'S BANK is launching pet insurance at £8.99 a month for dogs and £9.99 for cats. Cover includes up to £1,800 in vet fees. £400 in advertising and reward for lost pets, plus 500 Reward points per pet. Call the company on 0800 0565756.

BRISTOL & West is offering a one-year Option Bond, with a fixed rate of 8 per cent gross on balances over £5,000. A monthly income option is available at 7.72 per cent. A nine-month bond paying 7.65 gross is also available. Call 0800 262121.

CHARTWELL INVESTMENT Management has produced the second edition of its Carpenters Guide to Life Companies, which advises on which mutual insurers

to invest in for a windfall. The guide costs £5 including P&P and is available from 9 Kingsmead Square, Bath, BA12AB. Make cheques payable to Chartwell Investment Management Ltd.

FINANCIAL DISCOUNTS Direct, an execution-only broker, is offering corporate bond PEPs with no initial charges or cashbacks. For example, investing in M&G's Corporate Bond would earn a 0.5 per cent cashback, 0.75 per cent cashback for an investment into L&G's Corporate Bond and 3 per cent for investments into Scottish Widows' Corporate Bond. Call 0800 496477.

FURNESS BUILDING Society is launching a five-year fixed rate mortgage pegged at 6.89 on loans with an LTV of up to 80 per cent or 6.99 on an LTV of 95 per cent. No mortgage indemnity is levied. A fee of £295 is charged, plus a nearly redemption fee of 5 per cent if this takes place within the fixed rate period. Call 0800 834312.

GUINNESS FLIGHT is offering a 1 per cent discount on the 5 per cent initial charge of its Global Privatisation Trust, which invests in de-nationalisations worldwide, with an emphasis on Europe. Call 0171 5222111

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OFF IN29

Sentimental streak

The "chocolate box" style of Victorian paintings – sentimental, witty, mannered – is back in fashion. Five years ago, it was a quite different sort of Victorian painting – classical scenes of ancient opulence by Leighton and Alma-Tadema – that led the London pictures market out of recession. Today, the smart money is on paintings of rosy-cheeked Victorian children with pussy-cats, doggies and gee-gees.

"Genre" painting, as it is called – that is, scenes of everyday life – is so much in demand, that Christie's launched its first "genre" sale in March, at which a painting of a young girl with a St Bernard bitch and her puppies – "Which may I keep?" (1861) by the doyen of Victorian genre, Arthur Elsiey – fetched £144,500, three times its pre-sale estimate of £50,000-£70,000.

Both moneyed middle-aged people and young city whizz-kids are into genre. You can get an idea of their taste – and that of the late Victorians by looking at titles in recent top-ten price lists of the big auctioneers' Victorian picture sales. In June, Sotheby's had "A Moment of Affection", "Golden Days", "A Country Afternoon", "Sunday Best", "Picking Blackberries", "Goats and Chickens" and so on.

Five years ago, when Victorian picture prices hit a post-recession peak, egged on by a conspicuous £10m spending spree by Andrew Lloyd Webber, the top lots were classical, heroic in flavour – Poynter's highly architectural Roman bath scene, for example, or his sexy mythological storm nymphs, who were carried off from Sotheby's by Mr Lloyd Webber for £551,500.

Victorian picture prices, having sagged since then, are now surpassing 1994 prices but taste has shifted from hard and classical to soft and sentimental. Curiously, the shift exactly parallels that which occurred between the first and second halves of the last century.

Then, the picture market was swelled by new-rich industrialists who had never had much truck with the classics, preferring the hearth to Horace. Even classicists whose factories had made a pile became more mellow in their taste as they aged.

Time passes more quickly these days; in a single decade, the post-re-

There's money in the chocolate box style of Victorian painters, writes John Windsor

cession money-makers have worn themselves out. Instead of classical formality they now want home comforts.

A book has just been published on Elsiey (1860-1952), which should help his prices. He had a messy divorce and married the cousin who modelled for him, but apart from that, he lived the same life of countifried gentility that he depicted in his paintings. He rode a penny-farthing bicycle and painted family portraits – the pet dogs, that is – until his death.

Then, as now, buyers go for the way he posed pets with children. He was indulgent in allowing more than one pet in each picture – although he allowed only one dog at a time in his studio in case they caused ructions. Christie's were surprised when his painting of children on a beach failed to sell at £60,000 in the "Genre" sale, well short of its £80,000-£120,000 estimate. But the Victorians could have told them why – there were no fluffy animals in it, only a rather horrid crab.

Flops like that go to show that the market is discriminating. Sentimentalists are not necessarily soft in the head. They relish not only the Rembrandt-like lighting, the Constable-like landscape and the ideal compositions (the extra puppy, the sumptuous arrangement of the group), but also the hidden language of sentimentality. It had a heroism all of its own. It said: life could really be like this.

Above all, quality counts. A painting by a minor Victorian name can fetch a good price if the image is right – and if it has the added desiderata of being in good condition and fresh to market.

At Sotheby's Billingshurst salesroom later this month, Denny Easton has put an estimate of £30,000-£50,000 on Claude Calthrop's genre painting "Tea-Time". The Tissot-like image shows three women seated round a table without a doggy



'Which May I Keep?' by Arthur John Elsiey (1861-1952), the doyen of 'genre' painters

or pussy-cat in sight – but the scene is steeped in serenity.

A Calthrop, "Discarded Love Letters" – you get the picture? – made a modest record price of £16,500 at Sotheby's London salesrooms in 1993, since when his auction prices have not exceeded £6,000. That shows the disproportionately high value that Sotheby's Billingshurst are placing on image over name.

Take Elsiey as your guide and try image-spotting at the less expensive

salesrooms. You might pick up cheaply a good third division John Burr or an unrecognised second-division Frederick Morgan, whose studio Elsiey once shared. The pair quarrelled when Morgan accused Elsiey of painting one of his ideas. Who said sentimentalist are soft? Coming up with original images was as cutthroat a business then as buying them is likely to become today. Elsiey and Morgan never spoke to each other again.

Selected Watercolours and Oil Paintings, Tuesday 23 July (2pm) following the sale of Sporting Pictures and Animalier Bronzes (10.30am): Sotheby's Summers Place, Billingshurst, West Sussex (01403-833500). 'Golden Hours: The Paintings of Arthur J. Elsiey 1860-1952' by Terry Parke, is published at £25 (£2 postage and packing) by Richard Dennis, The Old Chapel, Shepton Beaschamp, Ilminster, Somerset (01460-240044).

I HAVE seen the future and in it your financial adviser could well be redundant! Already, through the Net, you have access to virtually the same information that your adviser uses on which to base the advice you receive. Which leaves the conclusions you are given to be based on a set of value judgements. But how are these value judgements made? Can they be calculated mathematically? If so, there is no need for human involvement in the equation.

Information technology systems and services company ICL has developed Internet Investment Adviser, using the latest mathematical models to offer interactive guidance on buying, selling and managing shares on-line. Your eyes may start to glaze at phrases like genetic algorithms and regression analysis. However, I have seen the software demonstrated and it does appear to work.

Interactive Investment Adviser actually learns which shares you are most interested in and provides more frequent updates on their movement. It will also evaluate the past performance of your share portfolio in order to predict future prospects and assess the level of risk attached to each investment. You can also create "what if" scenarios which allow you to see the impact on the portfolio of different sales or purchases of shares.

Additional features include the ability to put upper and lower share price limits on your portfolio. IIA can then alert you via e-mail or mobile phone when these are reached, offering you the opportunity to buy or sell as you desire.

Unfortunately, what you cannot yet do is actually buy this software for your own use. It is part of a complete portfolio of Lifestyle Banking software which ICL has designed. The company is in discussion with a number of brokerages and consumer trials should start later this year.

Advice online will also be available later this year from the Exchange and Microsoft which have come together to develop an Internet-based personal financial service offering a range of financial information and purchasing options together with online access to independent financial advisers.

The Exchange was originally set up in 1991 and provides information and transaction services to IFAs and other personal finance product providers. The homepage for the Exchange website is already available but merely displays the fact that the site is under construction.



INTERNET INVESTOR
ROBIN AMIOT

However, I am told you will be able to integrate the information which will be available on the site directly into Microsoft's Money 98 personal finance software. The Exchange website should be up and running in the autumn.

So what can you make use of right now? PlanIT Software, better known for its business software programmes, offers Financial Adviser, a database of personal finance ideas specifically for the UK. The software was actually written by a team which calls itself Moneyshield and which has its own separate website. This tells you who wrote the software and how it works.

The leading lights behind Financial Adviser are chartered accountant Toby Micklethwait, who previously set up the Association of Investors, and John Claxton, author of *Managing Your Personal Finances*. Financial Adviser comes on a CD-ROM. It works on PCs running Windows software and costs £29.95.

The software has already come under attack from the personal finance industry with allegations that it undermines professional advice. You may feel, given events like the pensions mis-selling debacle, that such professional advice could do with a little undermining. However, I would not recommend that you rely solely on software for your financial decision-making. What it can do is make sure you are in a position to ask pertinent questions of a financial adviser and give you the confidence to query any answers which do not satisfy you.

ICL: www.icl.com
The Exchange: www.exchange.co.uk
PlanIT Software: www.planit.co.uk
Moneyshield: www.moneyshield.co.uk

Be charitable and let the taxman pay up

Efficient ways to help those in need. By Rachel Fixsen

YOU KNOW the feeling. A pang of conscience stings you as you shift the latest pile of junk mail from letterbox to bin – a charity appeal envelope breaks free, and wins a chance to pose its heart-rending question.

Giving to charity is something most of us at least intend to do. Famine victims need food, and funded research can stamp out killer diseases. There are plenty of good reasons for giving. So why do so few of us do it?

Only 55 per cent of adults gave £5 or more to charity in 1995, according to research from Mintel. Women are marginally more likely to give than men, and charitable giving tends to increase with age. A higher proportion of over-65s give to charity than those between 45 and 54, even though pensioners have lower incomes.

But fewer people are now giving and younger generations are donating less in each age bracket, says Vicki Pulman of the Charities Aid Foundation. "People who do give are very generous and tend to be committed givers," she says. One of the main reasons people say they don't give is that the Government should be doing more, according to a CAF study.

Giving ad hoc to collectors' tins or in response to press or television appeals is one way to donate to charity.

But using one of the tax-efficient methods on offer makes a huge difference to the coffers of charities.

"Some charities and individuals aren't necessarily aware of the tax-efficient schemes available," Ms Pulman

says. "It is something that constantly needs to be reassessed because it can raise millions."

Just 15 per cent of money donated to charity is given in a tax-effective way. If this proportion could be doubled, then charities would receive an extra £134m a year, according to the National Council for Voluntary Organizations.

Deeds of covenant are contracts committing you to giving a sum to a charity for at least four years. You pay a sum net of basic-rate tax, and the charity claims back the tax. So if you pay £77 to your charity, it will receive a total of £100. If you are a higher-rate taxpayer, you can also claim the marginal rate of 17 per cent back.

Gift Aid is tax-effective for one-off donations. Ask for form

R190 (SD) from your tax office or the charity itself. You have to give at least £250 through Gift Aid. For that amount the charity would be able to reclaim £74.67 of tax, making your total donation £324.67.

For more flexible tax-efficient donations, you could open a charity account through CAF. This works by donating money to CAF through covenant or Gift Aid, which is then credited to your account, with tax reclaimed and added to the balance. You can then write cheques or use the Charitycard to make donations to charities.

Some employers run payroll giving schemes which allow you to give to charity by having it deducted gross from your salary and paid directly.

Payroll giving schemes are run through approved payroll collection agencies, such as CAF and The Charities Trust.

Your credit card can help a favourite charity. A wide variety of affinity credit cards are available, which make a donation to a certain charity according to how much you spend using the card. Oxfam has a card issued through the Co-operative Bank. Interest charges are comparable to other credit cards, and £5 is donated when the card is issued. After that 0.25 per cent of purchase values are donated to Oxfam, according to financial data provider Mooneyfacts.

If you have any shareholdings which are too small to be worthwhile, you can donate them to charity through ShareGIFT.

The Orr Mackintosh Foundation, which runs the scheme, sells the shares when it is appropriate and donates money raised to a wide range of charities including Save the Children, Sane and The Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

Don't forget other ways of giving. Any money you leave to a charity in your will is free of inheritance tax. And as charity shops are an increasingly important source of income for many charities, saleable gifts in kind really help.

The CAF has also found that on average, charities in the top 500 spend just over 13 per cent on fundraising and administration.

Charities Aid Foundation: 01732 520 000; ShareGIFT: 0171 461 4501; Charity Commission: 0171 210 4556; Accrediting Bureau for Fundraising Organizations: 0171 608 2597

THE CHARITY LEAGUE TABLE			
1996 CAF Ranking	Charity name	Total income, £000's	Total expenditure, £000's
1	Oxfam	129,397	132,761
2	National Trust	151,057	150,384
3	Imperial Cancer Research Fund	80,431	77,756
4	Cancer Research Campaign	66,221	69,977
5	British Heart Foundation	64,992	63,277
6	Royal National Lifeboat Institution	64,462	61,769
7	Bamardo's	96,057	101,314
8	Help the Aged	52,453	51,190
9	British Red Cross Society	92,221	91,852
10	SCOPE	79,234	79,985
11	Salvation Army	74,460	59,335
12	NSPCC	44,782	44,207
13	Marie Curie Cancer Relief	44,372	47,180
14	Save the Children Fund	38,205	36,654
15	RSPCA	84,385	84,342
16	Royal National Institute for the Blind	37,311	40,169
17	Christian Aid	54,227	55,269
18	RSPB	34,775	35,233
19	Action Aid	37,321	32,892
20	Christian Aid	39,545	36,191


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amateurs



But the case for expecting a period of relative outperformance by shares outside the Footsie index remains a plausible one. One well-known investor who thinks that the fashion for large company stocks – which has been a strong feature of

As the chart shows, periods of recession and slower growth tend to hit the valuations of smaller company shares harder than they do the market as a whole. When the

to the 1990-91 recession; and the sector is nothing like as in favour as it was in the couple of years preceding the last great fallout. To my mind, there is no doubt that this is true and we shall therefore see some continued outperformance by smaller companies in the years ahead – though whether this rela-

Years of research by academics and market analysts has failed to resolve all the conundrums of small company performance in the stock market. Research by Professor Jeremy Siegel in the United States demonstrated that the long run superior returns which smaller company shares have enjoyed over the

Thanks to the exceptional performance of smaller company shares in the first month of the year, an investor who followed this strategy in those three years would have made a 50 per cent return on his money – even though the market as a whole eventually fell by nearly 80 per cent during that period. This is not an experiment, I hasten to add, which one would necessarily want to see repeated now. There have to be better ways of testing the resilience of smaller company out-performance than revisiting the horrors of the early 1980s.

One reason for this is that providers pay advisers skinny commission by comparison to that available from insurance companies' plans. Instead of an up-front commission, which is then deducted from the premiums paid in the first year, investment trust plans pay an optional initial commission—typically 3 to 5 per cent of the first year's premiums. Some add a further annual renewal charge based on fund value or premium level. If you stop paying, there is far less of a hit on your funds. Mr Overgate points out: "Unlike life pension

Because of these low charges, investment trust plans look a lot more flexible than many of the longer established alternatives, particularly for the self-employed. Options like

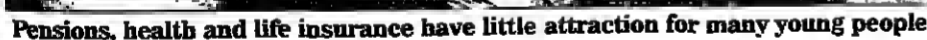
al equities, and smaller, country or sector specific trusts. Performance and volatility can differ very widely between these. When you buy into an investment trust, you buy a double-layered investment – shares

Take Edinburgh Fund Manager's Java Trust - investing only in Indonesian equities, which would have turned a three-year investment of

big bet on equities. I would advise most investors to build up core provision in a "with profits" plan, giving exposure to property; cash and gilts, before going investment trust.

Iain Beattie, investment director

Edinburgh Fund Managers. 0131-313 1000; **AIB Govett.** 01722 331265; **Flemings.** 0800 413176; **Foreign & Colonial.** 0171-454 1415; **Ivory & Sime.** 0131-225 1357



Cash not needed for day-to-day expenditure should be invested in an instant access savings account. If the bank offers free overdraft facilities with no interest payable, it is best to take the maximum, then move it to a savings account that pays the highest interest rate, even if that is a different bank or building society.

Andy McCell, marketing supervisor at Endsleigh Insurance, the insurance adviser to the National Union of Students, says that for most students the priority is insuring

Andy Couchman is publishing editor of 'HealthCare Insurance Report'

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Based on an assumption of \$655,000 you have a property valued at \$688,500, you would normally pay 25 years (600 monthly payments) on an equivalent loan to value 95% at 4.99% (1.5% variable) and total amount payable of £207,450.42. The mortgage assumes that all payments are made when due throughout the term and that the mortgage is eligible for payment of the applicable rate. It also assumes that there is no change in the Bank of England's current basic rate of 4.25% throughout the term of the mortgage and no changes to the value of the property and no changes to the mortgage rate of 4.99% (1.5% variable) and 1.5% (fixed) for 12 months and 9.00% thereafter, monthly payments are £1,498.54; 12.74 months after 12 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 24.48 months after 24 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 36.72 months after 36 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 48.96 months after 48 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 61.20 months after 60 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 73.44 months after 72 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 85.68 months after 84 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 97.92 months after 96 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 110.16 months after 108 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 122.40 months after 120 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 134.64 months after 132 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 146.88 months after 144 months payments payable are £1,498.54; 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Case takes it a step further than the information provided by Bloomberg and Standard & Poor's Microcap for the Independent is correct, but, then, no, if they accept our responsibility for errors, dissemination, sustaining of any incorrectness therein

Top performing funds of each sector are highlighted in bold. All funds are more than one year old. Fund sizes taken on the first day of the previous nine months. Fund performance all calculated on an Office to the Point basis (with expenses included) at 30 day ends (therefore, the way you would be expected to use Life Points) that are Closed to New Members have been omitted.

† Interest a fund available through a Manager's PEP address.

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Everyone's doing the twist and go

Scooters are making a comeback. Andy Gillard takes them for a fling

SO WHAT actually is a born-again scooter rider? Well, for a start, he or she is not necessarily a 40-something company director whose idea of weekend pleasure is taking up all three lanes of the motorway on his wide-glide, fat-boy, armchair on two wheels. Nor are they likely to be jumping astride a plastic-fantastic guided missile and stoving it into the nearest wall at 140mph. No, a born-again scooterist is a lot harder to define.

Scooters were originally conceived as a cheap form of transport that was simple enough for everyone to use. Today, the need for cheap transport is with us again, but for different reasons. Road congestion and an overcrowded public transport system are forcing us to look elsewhere for a solution. So all and tumble through traffic, while easier to operate than their predecessors, today's modern scooters are growing in popularity as a result.

Surprisingly, the selection of scooters available consists of the most popular models from yesterday as well as up-to-date, hi-tech offerings. The majority of new scooters are automatic, which means you simply twist the throttle and go. The exception is the traditional Vespa, which has a hand gear change.

All new scooters come with at least one year's warranty, with Aprilia and Piaggio/Gilera offering three years. Insurance is cheap, with many manufacturers offering "own brand" schemes to go with a newly purchased bike. At 16 you can ride a moped and at 17, up to a 125cc as a learner. Above that, you have to pass a test. Full car licence holders can ride a moped without L-plates.

If you live in a city centre or are travelling short distances, a 50cc moped may be all you need. Restricted to 30mph by law, they will cost you £15 a year in road tax. Prices in this category start at £889 OTR and run to £2,599 OTR for something that will make a £16,000 Harley Davidson look dull. The best seller here is the



The new 'refined' Vespa

Peugeot Speedfight. If, however, you want a little more speed, the "up to 100cc" category is where to look - with prices starting at £1,625 OTR. The top speed here is about 60mph and, once again, Peugeot's Speedfight tops the sales chart.

Next up are the 125cc machines. Prices start at around £1,945 OTR, rising to £3,249 OTR for the Italjet Formula 125. Also available is the Vespa ET4, an automatic version of the timeless classic. Speaking of which, the best-selling 125cc is still the Vespa T5 Classic, aimed at the purist at heart. With the right know-how, it can achieve up to 90mph. Over 125cc we have the traditional Vespa 200, the awesome Gilera Runner 180cc (90mph) and a range of automatic cruisers.

The born again may also literally be rekindling their youth by going for something they rode 30 years ago. If so, they will be riding an original Sixties Lambretta or Vespa.

In fact, heavy imports of classic second-hand Lambrettas and Vespas, mainly from Italy, mean that were they to be classed as new vehicles they would top the official sales charts.

Andy Gillard writes for 'Scooter- ing International', available monthly (£2.60) from newsgents.

James Ruppert spends a day at the race track with born-again bikers burning fuel and adrenalin

Cars are for wimps. The current generation of superbikes can out-accelerate any Porsche or Ferrari and match, or even generously exceed, their top speed. The Honda CBR1100XX Blackbird, for instance, will do 175mph with the throttle wide. Yet it costs under £10,000. In car terms that will just about buy you a sedate shopping supermini. Real cars start at £50,000.

So it isn't surprising that motorcyclists are enjoying a sales boom. The phenomenon has been dubbed the "Born-again Biker" syndrome. These are people who chased around on motorcycles in their youth before they grew up, grew sensible and got a career. As they enter their forties with money to spare, however, a superbike suddenly seems like the best way to recapture the thrills of their youth.

According to the Motorcycle Industry Association, sales of motorcycles are 55 per cent up on last year, and 1997 saw a record 11-year high. The Driver Standard Agency confirms the rider demographics: 61 per cent of licence applications are from over-30s.

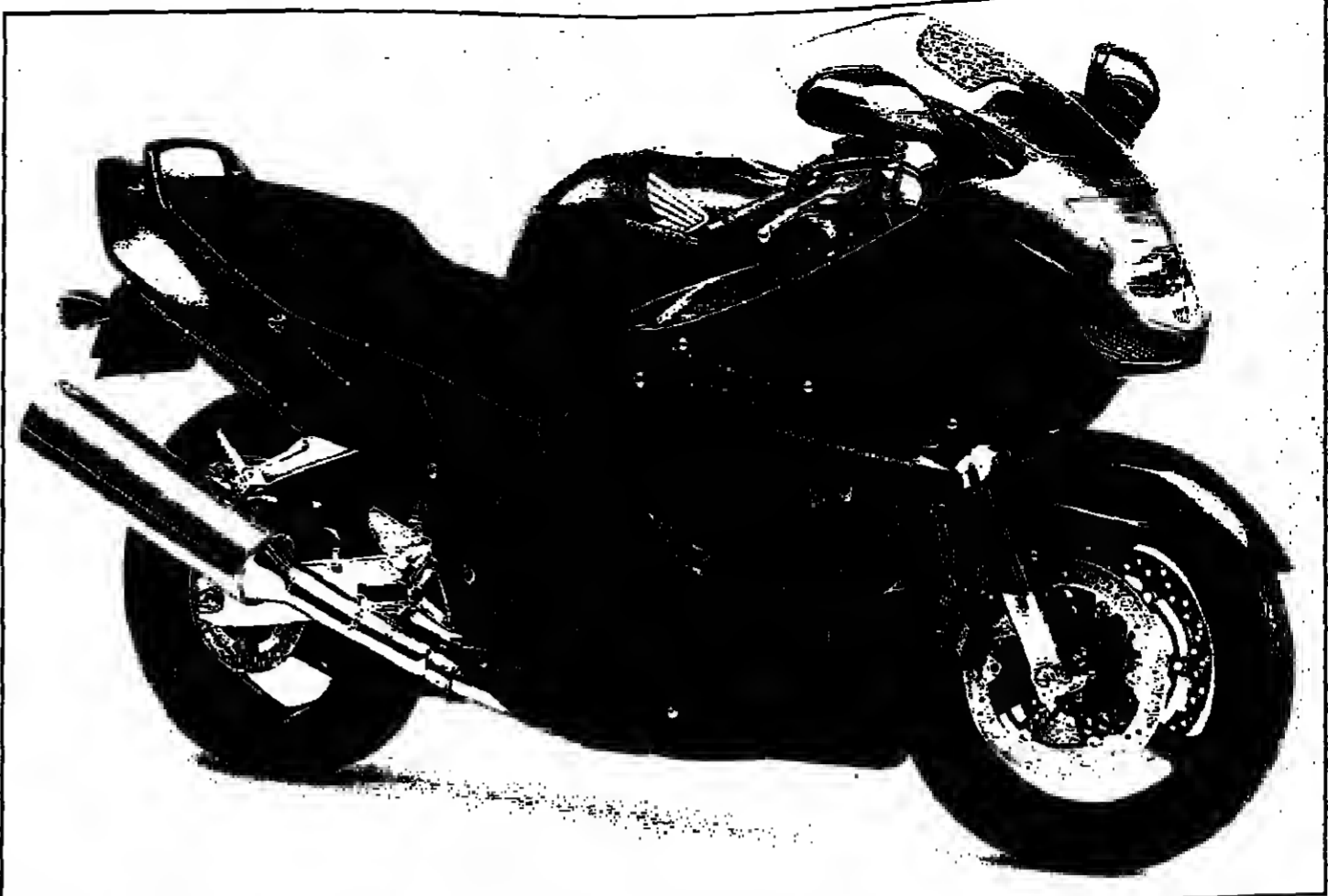
This isn't just a bloke thing either: the number of women riding motorcycles is up by 25 per cent.

These statistics raise the question of exactly what these new riders plan to do on two wheels. Though some commute and others go touring, a significant number actually want to explore the performance potential of their superbikes.

The only way they can do this is literally to hire a race track.

"I don't know about being born again. I didn't start riding until I was 40 and a lot of the chaps riding here today never stopped after they passed their test," says lawyer Mark Finburgh, the founder of Motorcycle and Car Folly. Today, Mr Finburgh and his colleagues have secured valuable track time on the Midlands Grand Prix Circuit at Donington.

Motorcycle and Car Folly traces its roots back half a dozen years to the City of London. "A friend's wife hired Goodwood race circuit for his birthday," says Mr Finburgh. "We had such a good time that we got together as Lawyers' Motor Cycle Folly with the express purpose of having fun on our big bikes, legally and safely. Since then we've let any old riff-raff in: doctors, accountants, bankers..." There also seems to be an increasing number of computer professionals in the group.



Honda Blackbird - good for 175mph at the twist of a throttle

Reborn to be wild

Though anyone can join in the fun with the Folly crowd, once a member (£100), there is a discount and preferential treatment when it comes to available places on the track day.

The Folly's literature says it provides "reassuringly expensive track days", starting at £95 and going up to almost £200 depending on the cost of hiring the circuit. This is only slightly more expensive than other organisations - partly to keep places to the minimum so that each rider has the maximum

amount of track time, but also to dissuade the hooligan element. "Some of the chaps have got a bad image and in the past have asked people to leave," says Mr Finburgh.

With this in mind, the Folly always employs instructors.

"I'm at work today," says instructor Dave Luscombe, clearly enjoying every minute. "The people in this club are more representative of bikers because they use their machines every day. It is my job to look after them, and I do find that a few laps soon teaches them

that they are not as good as they think they are.

"This has the effect of making them much safer on the roads, because they know there is no reason to be a hero."

The first riders arrive at Donington at 7.45am on this breezy Monday morning. Some have trailed the bikes, but most arrive in the saddle. They check in, sign a frightening disclaimer that asks for details of next of kin, then they set about putting tape over the wing mirrors and headlamps and gen-

erally psyching themselves up for the day ahead as the excitement and adrenalin start to build.

An 8.30am briefing reminds riders of the track rules, during which falling off is euphemistically referred to as a "spill". The first session begins at 9.00am. At 10.05am the paramedic ambulance makes its first sortie onto the track.

Someone has indeed had a spill, though it is not a member of the Folly club, but a rider from one of the other groups sharing the track. The battered machine is brought back to the paddock, together with the rider's denied pride plus a few bruises, and the fun can begin again.

"This is a damn sight safer than my rush-hour commute," says Mr Finburgh, who still has a sore arm from being punted off his bike by a careless car driver a few weeks ago in central London. Sheridan Coulter, however, won't let his road bike on a track day. "I have found that an ex-racing bike is much cheaper to crash. Why damage £10,000-worth of road bike when you can buy an ex-racer like mine for just a few thousand?" Why indeed.

These track days are well organised, good value and great fun. But they still won't persuade me not to be a four-wheeled wimp.

Contact Motorcycle and Car Folly: 01189-387322.

THE VESPA COMES OF AGE - AT LAST

FOR THOSE who are returning to motorcycling as a treatment for public transport turmoil, it is wise to resist the urge for the latest sports bikes, and look first at something more stylish and refined.

After 50 years of interminably slow evolution, nothing deserves the epithet of "refined" more than the new Vespa PX 200 Disc, which carries all the winning features of the original 1946 Vespa and adds to the list. Retained are the pressed steel monocoque chassis, a simple ultra-compact two-stroke en-

gine, and handlebar twistgrip gearchange. Perhaps one of the best features of the design is the ability to carry an interchangeable spare wheel like a car.

To this ancient recipe have been added some essentially modern ingredients. An electric start supplements the kick-start, but the big news is the introduction of a hydraulic front disc brake for the first time on a traditional Vespa.

Piaggio - the Vespa's Italian parents - has never been a company in a rush, and after its main rival in the Sixties, Lam-

bretta, introduced the first production two-wheeler with a front disc brake in 1962, it only took the Vespa 35 years to catch up.

Vespa PX 200 Disc Engine: £2,111.5. Fan-cooled 197cc 2-stroke single cylinder. **Transmission:** 4-speed manual. **Positive:** Front disc brake, large toolbox, comfortable new seat, electric start, capacity for spare wheel, proven classic design, good price for this engine. **Negative:** No helmet bag, can't be ridden legally by learners.

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The motorcycle show gets on the road

MOTORCYCLING IS respectable, and that's official. Not long ago, many people would have considered a motorbike out of place if parked outside a cultural temple such as New York's Solomon R Guggenheim Museum.

Yet the latest stars of the Guggenheim's famous Frank Lloyd Wright spiral are more than 100 of the most significant, innovative and simply beautiful bikes ever built brought together for an exhibition entitled "The Art of the Motorcycle".

The exhibition traces the motorcycle's development from the earliest steam-powered machine to the latest Italian superbike. What archetypal bikers such as Johnny, Marlon Brando's character in *The Wild One*, or Sonny Barger, leader of the infamous Oakland Hell's Angels in the Sixties, would have made of such glorification of their once rebellious mode of transport is anyone's guess.

In fact, both Johnny and Barger are also featured in a series of motorcycle-based films that are being shown as part of the exhibition. As well as telling the story of the motorcycle, the Guggenheim's display aims to highlight the major innovations in two-wheeled design, and to convey the social impact of bikes ranging from the Velosolex moped traditionally loved by the French to the Harley-Davidson chopper ridden by Peter Dinklage in *Easy Rider*.

"The motorcycle is the perfect metaphor for the 20th century," says Thomas Krens, director of the Guggenheim Foundation and the project's chief curator. "The motorcycle and its history represent the themes of technology, engineering, innovation, design, mobility, speed, rebellion, desire, freedom, love, sex and death."



A legendary Hildebrand & Wolfmüller Roland Brown

"It is a quintessential symbol of the insecurity and optimism of our time."

Krens and his team have put together the exhibition with imagination and thoroughness. The surroundings alone are breathtaking. Frank Gehry, acclaimed for his recent design of Guggenheim's museum in Bilbao (where the exhibition will be shown in autumn next year), revamped the New York building's already magical Frank Lloyd Wright rotunda using sheets of mirror-finish stainless steel that bounce reflections throughout the interior.

But "The Art of the Motorcycle" succeeds above all due to the inspired selection of machines, which have been drawn from museums, manufacturers and private collections worldwide. In the ground-floor foyer are the newest and oldest: a gorgeous, yet-to-be-released 750cc F4 superbike from revitalised Italian marque MV Agusta; and the steam-powered motorised bicycle built in 1868 by Michaux-Perreaux of France.

Travelling up the spiral, the bikes are arranged chronologically in groups of 10 or a dozen, one from almost every year. The first section, "Inventing the

Motorcycle: 1868-1900", is arguably the most fascinating of all, containing a replica of Daimler's wooden Einspur, which made the first recorded motorcycle journey in 1885. Further on, "Time, Space and Speed: 1894-1919" includes the 1500cc Hildebrand & Wolfmüller, also from Germany - the world's first production bike. These and many others are rare, truly legendary machines that few enthusiasts will have seen before. Numerous Harleys include a 1923-model board-track racer, the first Sportster model of 1957 and the ill-fated XLCR Café Racer of the Seventies.

British bikes range from the innovative Scott Squirrel two-stroke of 1929 to the Norton Commando, via Brough Superior, Vincent and Triumph Bonneville.

The Art of the Motorcycle, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue (at 89th Street), New York, NY 10128 (tel: 00 1 212 423 3840), until 20 September; then at The Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 7 November to 31 March 1999; and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, autumn 1999. **ROLAND BROWN**

OF THE many Heath Robinson-like contraptions that make up the modern car, none is so needlessly complicated as the manual gearbox. For starters, it demands that a car has three pedals when, to paraphrase Dickens, popular prejudice runs in favour of people having only two feet.

Even Grand Prix drivers have given up the challenge. Modern F1 cars do not have foot clutches, the technical boffins having discovered a better way. The clutches of F1 cars are engaged automatically, as drivers change gear using steering column-mounted paddles.

Yet modern road cars still make do with a stick having to be negotiated through an awkward H-pattern and a clutch which, in concert with the brake and the accelerator, demand the most dextrous of feet movements. Even if you are good at it, it can still be a pain. Juggling with clutch, throttle and gears as you fight your way home in nose-to-tail traffic is irritating, tiring and bad for wearing out the soles of good shoes.

Until recently, the only alternative has been the automatic gearbox. In America, where motorists are less macho than in Europe and take less pleasure in driving, almost everybody buys automatic. In the past year or so, new style semi-automatic gear changes have also surfaced. The Porsche 911 Tiptronic was the first, which seek to replicate clutchless F1 gear shifts using paddles, buttons or a stick. Most are at least partly a con, for they use automatic gearboxes as their base. As a result, power is not parcelled to the wheels as efficiently as on a manual gearbox.

That is changing. The large car makers are on the verge of releasing gearboxes which can double as both manuals and automatics. Of the mass makers, Renault is likely to be there first. Next year it launches



GAVIN GREEN

Fed up with the manual gearbox?

Fear not, a new-style

semi-automatic is on the way

a new transmission called the BVR (boite de vitesses robotisée, or robotised gearbox). I drove a prototype version recently, fitted to a Twingo. At the touch of a button, your fully automatic gearbox (ideal in traffic) can be converted into a five-speed manual. Hit some traffic again, or lose interest in DIY gear changing? Then go back to full auto mode.

There is no clutch, even in manual form. On the prototype I drove, you changed gear by using a co-convictional stick. In production form, gear changes will be made by F1-style steering column paddles and the change pattern will be sequential, as in a motorcycle. Push a button, and you are back in full auto mode.

The BVR system is likely to be offered in the Clio and Mégane from next autumn. Other clutchless manual gearboxes from other manufacturers are imminent.

For those who like to labour, the clutch will probably always have its place. But for those who like their machinery to shoulder as much of the responsibility as possible, the "third pedal" is on its way out. Although few will admit it, most drivers must privately be rather glad.

The Golf GTI loses its glow

Volkswagen's new GTI models are fast, well crafted and good-looking. But they lack the fun – and the throaty burble – of their predecessors. By John Simister

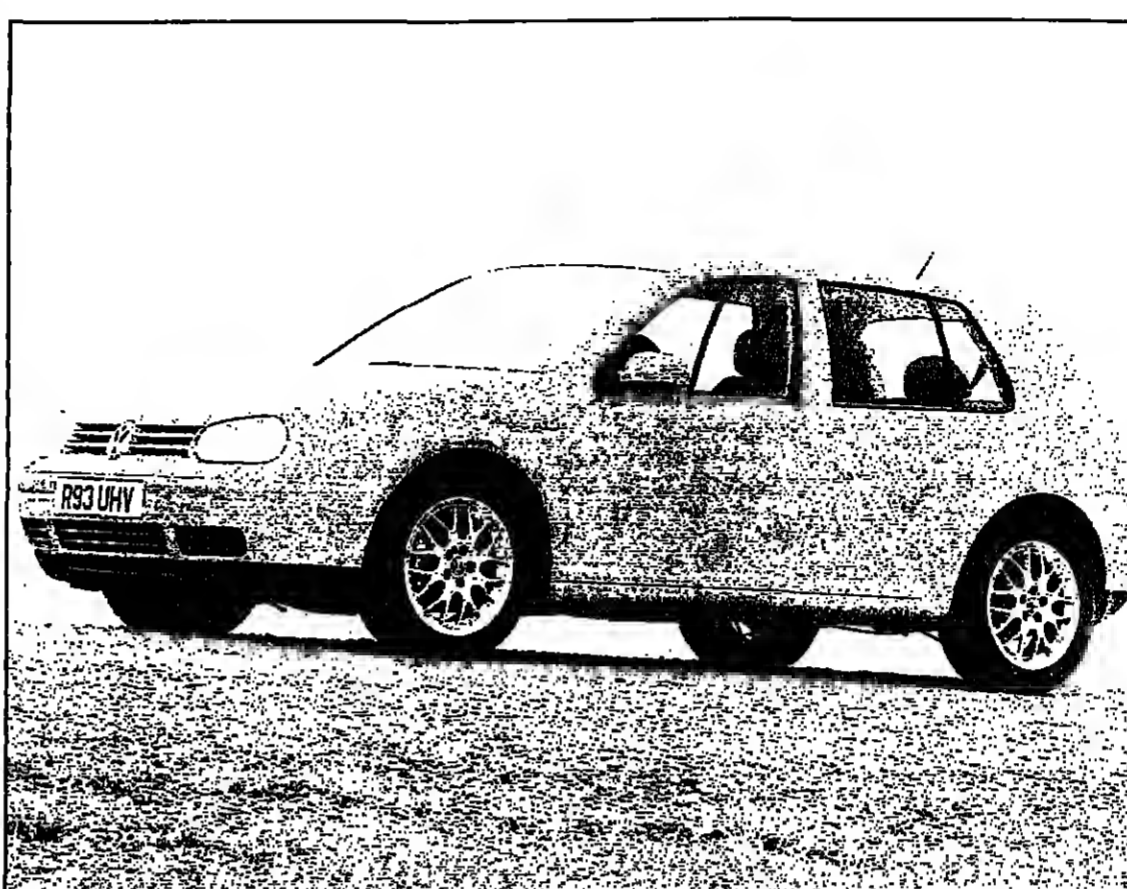
Red braces. Mobile phones. Filofaxes. City traders. Yuppies. Ad agencies. Sloane Square. Golf GTIs. That's the power-clutch out of the way, then. Besides, as clichés they are 10 years out of date. The world has moved on.

In this moved-on world, though, you can still buy a Golf GTI. In fact you can now buy a Mark Four version, as part of the new range of Golfs that has finally gone on sale here. The new Golf GTI is a car of its time, all mature and responsible-looking with little visual hint of power and pleasure potential. It is either right on target for today's "my-car, my-conscience" motoring angst, or it has missed the point of being a GTI. Which of these applies, we are about to find out.

It carries much iconic baggage, the GTI. Those initials count for a lot. And they sound especially good after the Golf word, not least because the first Golf GTI – almost unbelievably, it appeared 22 years ago – was the first example of that fine breed of fun-car, the hot hatchback. So Volkswagen should be careful not to abuse its custodial responsibility of a car-culture phenomenon.

Or you could take an alternative view. If Volkswagen invented the modern GTI, then it can do what it jolly well likes with the idea. So, here it is, the 1998 Golf GTI. Actually, there are two versions, corresponding in degrees of hatch heat to the old eight-valve and 16-valve models. One, simply GTI, has a 125bhp, 20-valve engine of 1.8 litres. It is a UK-only model, because we like the GTI name so much. Elsewhere in Europe, the equivalent car is called the Golf Highline. Hmm.

The other, which is a GTI everywhere it is sold, sits a little lower on fatter wheels, has a grander interior with huggy Recaro seats and black-lacquered wood trim, and is powered by a turbocharged version of the same engine. It gives 150bhp, the same amount of power as the 2.0-litre, 16-valve, top version of the old GTI



produced. But there are no spoilers, no black plastic wheel-arch trims, no twin exhaust pipes. We are talking incognito here.

Start it up, and you bear not the throaty burble you might expect, but a cultured hum. Drive off, and you feel out the instant, crisply delivered, muscular thrust that made the first GTIs such a delightful drive, but a soft response and a gradual, though quickening, gathering of speed.

Then we come to a corner. The steering is light and smooth, but although the tyres bite hard into the road surface and GTI snicks quickly round the bend, the feeling is one of

elasticity rather than the sports-car precision we used to know. Only when the road gets bumpy does the GTI feel like anything other than a normal Golf with a little more grip and a fair degree more pace (it is as fast as the old GTI 16V, possibly faster, although it does not feel that way). This is because that lower suspension reaches the extremes of its movements frequently and abruptly, which can get thoroughly uncomfortable. In the old GTI, the suspension's action was firmer so it did not bang up against the bumps as often.

And that, I'm afraid, is it. The GTI 1.8T is fast, beautifully made and well

equipped, but what made the old Mark One and Mark Two GTIs sparkle, and the Mark Three glow, has been extinguished. What the 1.8T does is largely fine, but the way that it does it is rather dull. As I suspected, Volkswagen has missed the point that it not only used to make but also defined. After all, if you're the my-car, my-angst type, you wouldn't be buying a GTI anyway.

But there is a postscript to this tale. The 125bhp GTI, though slower, has an engine which answers your commands with much of the old crispness. It also rides serenely over bumps, has a similar (though skinnier) design of

SPECIFICATIONS (1.8T)

Prices: from £15,515 (3dr GTI) to £17,735 (5dr GTI 1.8T).
Engine: 1,781cc, four cylinders, 20 valves, 150bhp at 5,700rpm with turbo, 125bhp at 6,000rpm without.
Transmission: five-speed gearbox, front-wheel drive.
Performance: 134mph, 0-60 in 8.5sec, 31-36mpg (GTI 1.8T), 125mph, 0-60 in 9.9sec, 29-34mpg (GTI)

RIVALS

Alfa 145 Cloverleaf: £16,557. Intriguing square-tailed shape, crisp-edged 2.0-litre engine, individuality on wheels.
Fiat Bravo HGT: £15,792. Smooth and melodic five-cylinder engine, a creamy drive rather than a fizzy one. Good value.
Honda Civic 1.8 VTI 5dr: £17,125. Staid looks sit strangely with mad, high-revving VTEC engine. Not as bland as it seems.
Peugeot 306 GTI-6: £18,645. If a GTI is meant to give a good time, no Golf-size car does it better than the powerful, six-gear Peugeot.

alloy wheel, and is actually a more enjoyable car to drive. It leans quite a lot in corners, and it is not especially lively, but the lowlier GTI is still the quickest four-cylinder Golf that doesn't have a turbocharger.

Golfs answering to that description have always been GTIs hitherto, so on that basis the new one just about qualifies for its initials. In other ways it is a long way from fitting the template created by its predecessors – that task has now fallen to the Peugeot 306 GTI-6 – but the Golf not-Highline is nevertheless a thoroughly "nice" car. Less, in the strange case of the Golf GTI, is more.

I loved my old Beetle – but it kept trying to kill me

I THINK it would be rather unkind to call my Volkswagen Beetle a worst car. It was more of an old faithful which got older and less faithful as time went on.

It was painted sky blue and belonged to an old boyfriend, so it sort of came with the territory. At the time, I lived on the coast and with all the salt air it became progressively rustier and more dilapidated by the week.

Its worst fault was that it would try to kill me. Every time I put the beater on, exhaust

fumes would find their way into the cabin. I would have to stop and get out, before I passed out. Presumably the smoke got in through the rust holes.

In winter it was hell. I can remember on one occasion dashing down the M23 furiously scraping at the ice forming on the inside of the windscreen. I did not dare switch the beater on, but I did wonder which was the least painful way to go, being gassed, or hitting a tree that I could not see.

The Beetle was not that

clever in crosswinds which would thump against the slab sides and push it off course. Much the same would happen when juggernauts overtook me as well.

Having said all that, though, the Beetle took me on countless romantic picnics and safely got me around the south of France one summer. It may not have

been comfortable, but it was very characterful. My ex-sister-in-law called it a sewing machine and really did not understand the appeal of a Beetle, but then she had a BMW with personalised number plates.

Then came the dreaded day when I took it to Mr Puffer. He was a wonderful German

mechanic who specialised in Beetles. He could rescue almost any wreck, but even he shook his head and said: "You must understand that even Beetles have their day. And his was bad, it's day."

Just thinking about it now makes me want to shed a tear. Anyway, it went to an enthusiast for £250 and he said he would restore it.

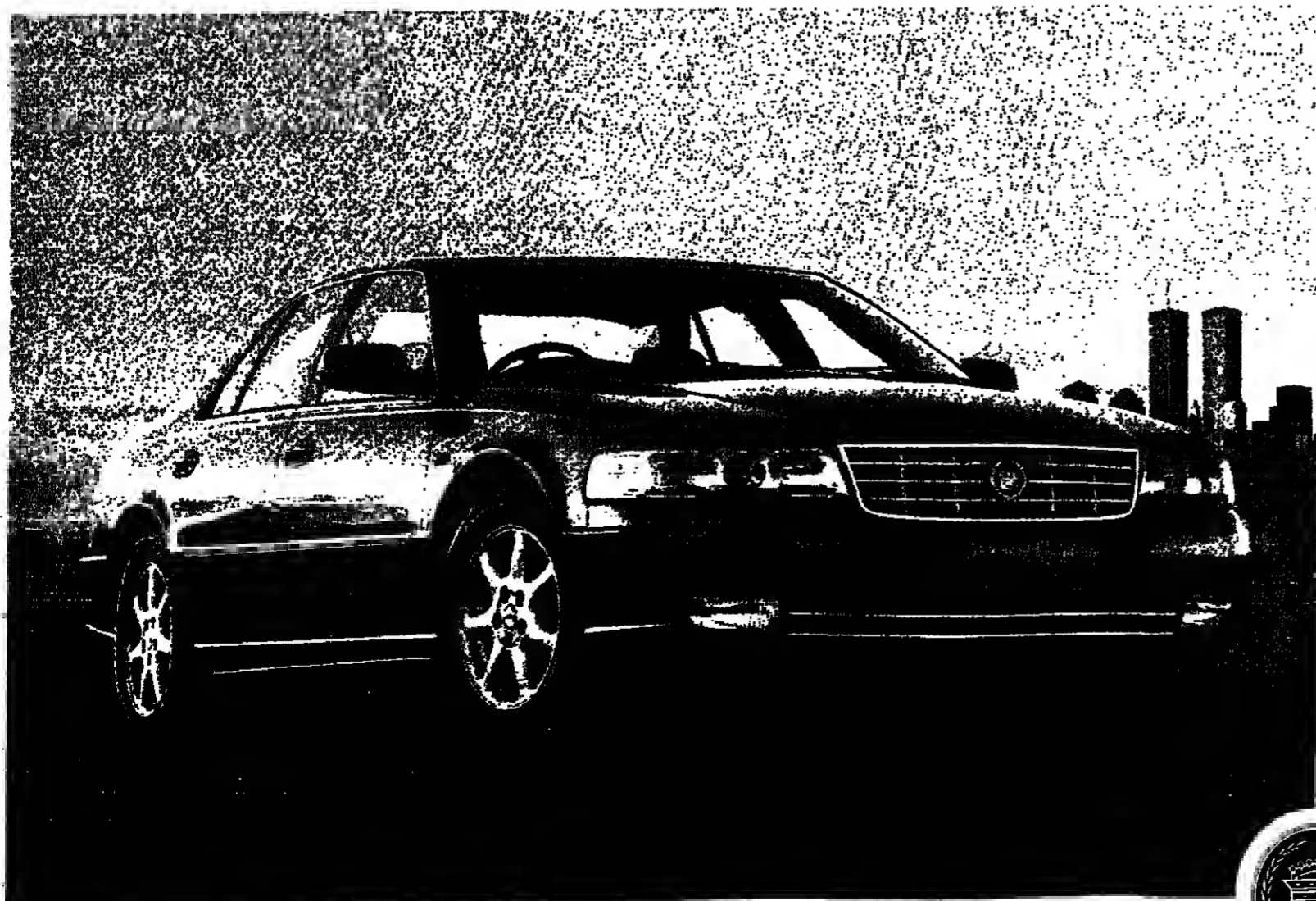
The Beetle was replaced in the mid-80s by another Volkswagen, this time it was a bit more contemporary and a lot

more yuppie – a Golf GTI in fact. I've still got it after 150,000 miles, so I suppose this has to be my best car. But I still miss the old faithful.

Katherine Bradley Hole is a regular contributor to 'Gardeners' World Magazine' and has received two awards from the Garden Writers Guild. Her new book, 'The Garden Lovers' Guide to Britain' is published by BBC Worldwide at £12.99. She was talking to James Ruppert



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Cadillac

A property so desirable, the developer bought one himself

**Ron and David
are putting
their money
where their
mouths are.
Mary Wilson
reports**

IT IS all very well for an estate agent or developer to spout loquaciously about the merits of a development they are involved with, but do they ever take heed of their own advice? It seems that some do.

Ron Neale and David Whitworth, joint managing directors of Roundset, which is building 16 large apartments at Sandbanks in Dorset - the highly sought after land spit dividing Poole Harbour and the Solent - have both bought a home there.

Mr Neale lived in south-west London for 20 years with his wife and family before he moved to Dorset. "The children had left home and we decided we were ready for a change. I had known David for 25 years and he kept on telling me it was a great life down there, so we moved in 1995.

"We lived in temporary accommodation while we wound down the London business. Within a couple of months the Sandbanks site came up," he says. "This was a golden opportunity to buy somewhere right on the water."

They have bought a large three-bedroom apartment on the ground floor, with its own little bit of garden.

David Whitworth, with his wife, Susan and youngest son, Russell, have bought a three-bedroom duplex apartment next door. "We moved down here 13 years ago," he says. "All the family have a close



Ron Neale and David Whitworth with their wives on site at Sandbanks

Russell Sach

affinity with the sea and my 17-year-old son is a keen yachtsman. I never thought I would be lucky enough to secure such a unique site and since I have lived and breathed it for the last two-and-a-half years, it seemed the natural thing to make my home there."

At the same development, Nigel Still of Stephen Noble Lane Fox, the agent selling it, has bought the top floor of the lodge, which sits just behind the main block. "Having spent 15 years of my life as an agent, I reckon this development to be one of the best I have ever seen, and I also per-

ceive it to be a good investment. "At the moment, I live with my wife, Nicola, at Canford Cliffs. We get a glimpse of the sea and we both wanted to get closer to the water. When I sold the land to Roundset, I told them then that I wanted one of the apartments when they were

built". Although the two directors have probably snaffled the two best apartments, there are nine left, which Stephen Noble Lane Fox are selling for £415,000 to £795,000.

In Devon, Bill Jury, managing director of Thurstone Rock Developments, has just bought an

apartment at his latest development of 12 three-bedroom apartments, right on the beach at Thurstone looking across Bigbury Bay to Burgh Island. "Four investors, including myself, formed a syndicate to buy the flat. It is in a unique position and we believe that

whatever happens in the future this uniqueness will not go away," he says.

There are only two apartments left in the development, which Marchand Petit is selling at £175,000 and £180,000.

It is a bit more tricky for an agent to buy a property it is marketing, especially if that agent valued it in the first place. If the correct procedures are not taken, it is all too easy for accusations of malpractice to be levelled. Philip Woolf of London agents, Druce, was so taken by a new development, King Henry's Reach, at Hammer-smith, that he was prepared to make the effort.

"I wanted to buy one of the smaller flats as a pied-à-terre," says Woolf. "I just thought it was a great place to live. I had to register my interest and also, because we were the agents to value the apartments, had to make a formal approach to the developer and owner of the site before I could buy. They needed to be sure that I had not undervalued the flats to my advantage."

As it turned out, he was offered a price he could not refuse just a month after he had bought the flat, so never got the chance to see just how great it was.

In London's Docklands, a subsidiary company of Aylesford which is selling Canary Riverside has bought one of the better apartments. The development is a mix of luxury apartments, retail units and hotel, with a health club and tennis courts.

"We thought it was an intelligent thing to do," says Andrew Langton, managing director of Aylesford. "A butcher sometimes gets the best meat, and we chose one of the better apartments here, high up in Berkeley Tower, with wonderful views." Apartments range from £198,000 to £2.6m.

Stephen Noble Lane Fox (01202 557766); Marchand Petit (01548 837588); Aylesford (0171 351 2383)

Selling your home? Beware buyer No 8, unlucky for some

Perseverance is the highest virtue.

By Ginetta Vedrickas

MOVING IS easy. You put your property on the market, find somewhere to buy and start packing. Most movers estimate the entire process takes about three months. But is this accurate?

A survey conducted by the National Association of Estate Agents shows that in May 1998, going from instruction to completion took 11.4 weeks on average, compared to 12.6 in May 1997. The process involved 8.3 viewings before sale, compared to 9.1 last year.

Have seven people viewed your property? Before handing over the keys to number eight, beware. It is not always that easy.

Ros Whittingham put her Croydon flat on the market in January. "Everyone said it was a great time to sell, so we thought it would be a matter of weeks. The first person to view seemed keen, but we never heard from them again. Several offers have come to nothing, and our agent has persuaded us to drop the price by £10,000."

Is Ros demoralised? "At the beginning, I tidied up, made fresh coffee and always had flowers around. In the last six months I've grown to hate the house. It's an effort even to make the beds," says Ros, who estimates that 30 people have viewed - and no, she can't remember number eight.

Jane Saleem has trouble recalling how many people wanted to buy her Victorian terrace in East Dulwich, even though there were serious buyers who went as far as arranging surveys. "I think it was six. I met numbers one, two and three, but I gave up after that."

The Saleems wanted to buy a larger house nearby, and within weeks they had accepted an offer on their terrace. Sale and purchase appeared to progress normally until three months later, when their buyers "announced they weren't interested."

With hindsight, Jane realises: "It was all a bit too quiet, and I later found out that they hadn't done a

search, so probably hadn't been interested for some time." The family found another agent.

Buyers two, three, four and five made offers, and Jane remembers kindly the ones that "got out quickly". The Saleems made a brave decision: "We braced ourselves and asked our bank for a bridging loan." They found it a "hugely expensive and humiliating" process, but at least they moved.

Meanwhile, their old house was still attracting potential buyers. But agents had to stop the increasingly desperate Saleems from accepting "ridiculous amounts" for the property until the sixth buyer came along, bringing with her a reasonable offer and a happy ending: "The agents made us reject her first offer and we finally accepted £14,000 more than the original price, which covered the cost of the eight-month loan."

Some movers expect a less stressful experience. When friends of Jackie and Russ Ede announced they were divorcing and wanted to buy two smaller houses, Jackie and Russ jumped at the chance of swapping homes and agreed to pay the difference, thus avoiding agents' fees, stamp duty and, worst of all, uncertainty.

The process was intended to be speedy, but the friends pressured Jackie by demanding completion within three weeks: "Just before Christmas I was in a complete panic. I had a preoccupation with the loft and insisted it had to be completely clear, so I drove around town to charity shops with van-loads of stuff."

The clear-out was in vain. One half of the divorcing friends "had a wobbly and refused to move out". Jackie says: "We still believed it could be resolved, but it was difficult because sometimes they were talking to each other and sometimes they weren't. It went on and on." The crunch came months later when the Edes saw "their" house for sale in a local agent's window. It was up for

£50,000 more than their offer. The Edes have accepted that the swap will never happen, and after months of delay and half-hearted attempts to sell they are preparing for action and looking further afield for a new home. "We've resigned ourselves to carry on for as long as it takes."

Unforeseen circumstances can delay sales for months and sometimes years. But Chelsea agent Marcus Kemp believes that a property should sell within three to four months. "As long as it's at the right price." He tells the cautionary tale of a recent sale: "We had it on offer for 22 months. It had been over-valued and I had to convince the client to reduce the price." Did she take it well? "It's difficult. You have to lead up to it." The flat eventually sold when the market caught up, but Marcus's client lost out on properties she wanted. Is he ever tempted to give up and hand them back? "I'm always prepared to give something a crack, but if it's clear it's never going to sell, we sometimes decline the instruction."

But take heart, the process doesn't have to be so tortuous. Businessman Andrew Kingston received an offer on his four-bedroom Taunton home on a Friday night: "We couldn't do anything until Monday because everywhere was closed, but our purchasers wanted completion by Thursday week."

On Saturday, Mr Kingston made an offer on an empty property which, after negotiation by phone with the vendors, was accepted. Did he get his quick sale? "We made sure of it by shouting at our solicitors. We battered them to death. I told mine that unless he did it I wouldn't pay," says Mr Kingston, who met the deadline and moved in nine working days later.

Last week's story "All-In Buy and Sell" (page 9) was mistakenly attributed to Penny Jackson. It was in fact written by Ginetta Vedrickas



Jackie Ede and son

Neville Eder

The lure of the outer zones

IT IS a story with a familiar plot. Boy - or girl - obtains job in London, finds a place to live in one of the central zones and for a while enjoys the attractions the metropolis has to offer.

Slowly, and often imperceptibly, life takes its course, and once single individuals one day find themselves facing a multitude of sometimes contradictory demands on the property front.

For some, it is the arrival of children that acts as a catalyst. Robert Fallon, an economist, and his wife, Jane, enjoyed the centrality of a flat in Pimlico, London, until the arrival of their daughter. "We loved the area, but many of the properties tended to be converted into flats, mostly without outside access, and we now wanted something larger," he said. "There were houses available but the problem was they tended to be way out of our reach financially."

While nearby Battersea used to be a favourite destination for many like the Fallons to migrate to, it had already become one of several central London "hot-spots", shorthand for soaring property prices.

The economic realities of the job market can mean that leaving London completely is impossible, or inadvisable from a career point of view, yet, in the case of the Fallons, the new priorities and demands of a different life-stage also had to be met.

The answer for some is to move to the outer zones. Dotted around the capital, they typically offer property hunters more for their money, and although a greater distance from the hub, they are still linked to it by the umbilical cord of a mainline railway route or by the underground system. Most, too, still retain an 0181 prefix, a vital factor for those who psychologically need to feel that they still retain links with the capital, and are not altogether banished to a suburban hinterland.

Mike Lawson of estate agents' Andrew Ward, in High Barnet (zone 5), notes: "Many of our customers are couples who initially bought a flat in central London. When the children come along, and particularly when they start to reach school-age, the clash between the type of property and its location on the one hand and the changing needs of the family becomes starkly apparent."

The lure of the outer zones is clear at least in terms of relative

property prices. "If a couple are, say, selling a two-bedroom flat in Islington, it may fetch £200,000 and for that they find they can buy an attractive house, if they are prepared to move out," says Mr Lawson. In fact a three-bedroom Edwardian terrace in High Barnet goes for around £150,000.

John Lucas, of Mann and Co, in Bromley, Kent (also zone 5), works from an office directly facing the station from where many hopeful property-hunters alight. He says: "We find that factors like air quality, reputation of schools, and crime levels are often key ones for those seeking to leave central London. Prices too are very different to most of central London. A modestly sized Victorian terrace can be bought for around £115,000-£120,000."

The notion that it is "nesters" alone who are looking for life on the edge is dispelled by Mr Lucas. Many singles too can, apparently, tire of the heat of central London prices, and are prepared to move out to obtain what they see as a better bargain, while females in particular are attracted to what they perceive to be safer areas.

"We have many singles looking for flats who are often pleasantly surprised at what they can get for their money if they are willing to forego the trendy areas. The prime consideration, however, tends to be that it is easy walking distance to the station." It takes around 18 minutes on a non-stopping train to Victoria, and around 25 minutes to the City. "Many of our customers are looking specifically for properties that are no more than 10-15 minutes walk from the station," he says.

Greater distance inevitably brings its additional travel costs - an annual season ticket from zone 5 to central London currently costs £1,252. In addition, as the Fallons wryly note: "We do not expect to see the increases in price on our property that might have happened if we had stayed in central London."

There are other factors in the equation: "It definitely feels different," says Lucy Myers who moved from zone 1 flat to zone 5. "Whereas I used to feel I was living in the capital, now I feel I am living in the South, which for me, a Northerner, is a very distinct difference."

Andrew Ward: 0181 441 6000; Mann and Co: 0181 460 1199.

GWENDA JOYCE-BROPHY

Low tables aim high

The modest coffee table is getting grander

By Rosalind Russell

At a cool £1,175, the Sirfo Goose Table is not the sort of furniture onto which you would want to plonk a mug of coffee.

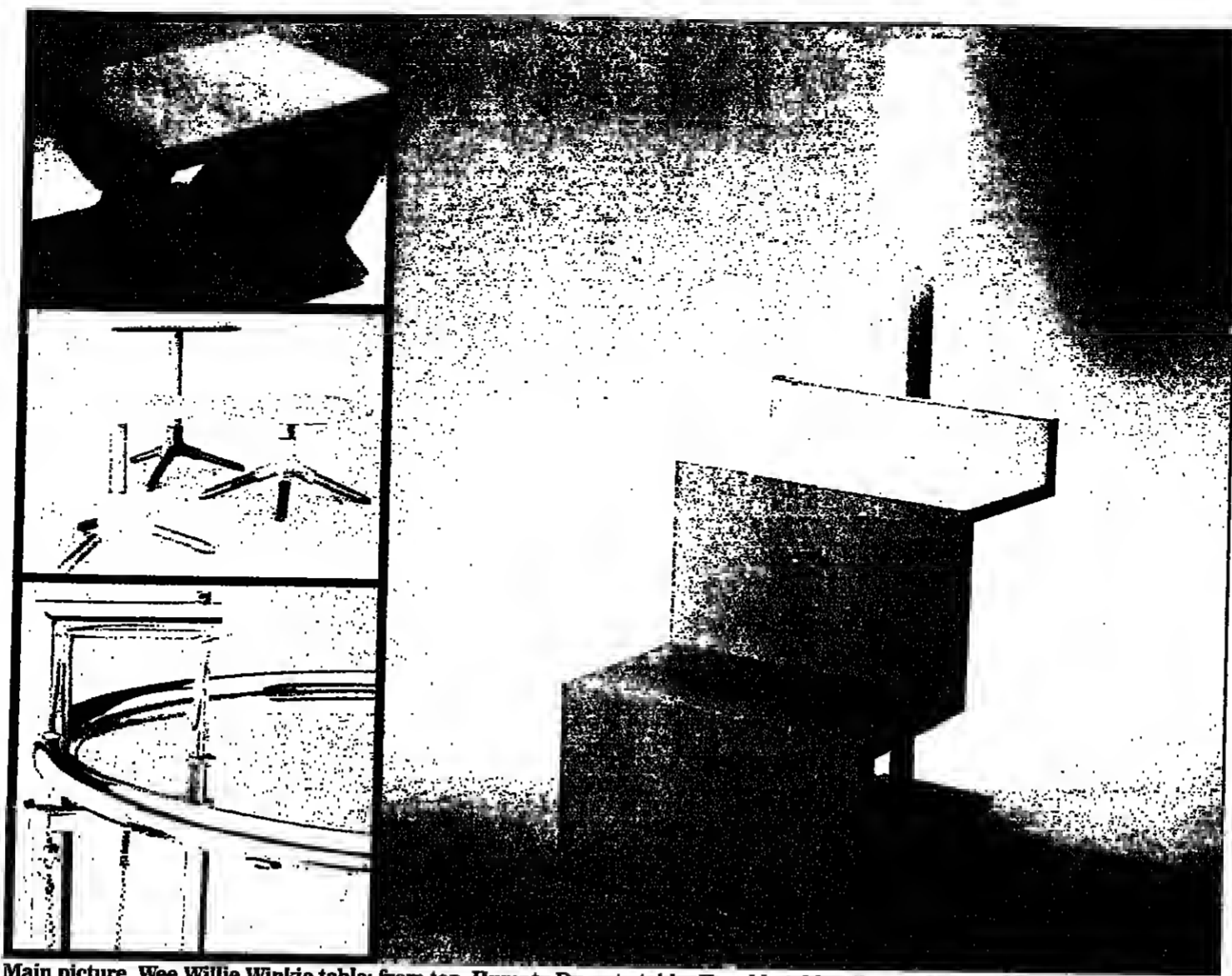
Designed by Alessandro Mendini, and produced in a limited edition of 1,000, the aluminium and glass table is definitely not to be described as a coffee table, an expression now considered unbelievably naïf. They are now known as low tables among the kind of clientele who will admire the goose table in a new London showroom of contemporary furniture and art, Noel Hennessy Furniture.

The coffee table has now become as grand and important as the oversized books it used to support. Having played Cinderella for so long to the rest of the sitting room furniture, the low table is blossoming into a more high profile role in contemporary design. Glass, stainless steel and leather are preferred materials.

Chris Lefteri, who trained at the Royal College, had been working mostly as an industrial designer. But then he thought of designing a series of domestic low tables using nursery rhymes as a starting point. This has resulted in the Humpty Dumpty table (£412), made of brick clay and shaped like half an egg, on feet. It is about to appear in a Panasonic TV commercial.

"What happens when you start from an abstract point of view - the nursery rhymes - is unexpected," says Chris. "The brick material idea came from the wall Humpty Dumpty was sitting on."

The same reasoning led to the production of a Wee Willie Winkie table - primarily designed as a child's bedside table, but can be used in the sitting room - which is stepped like Willie's stairs and glows



Main picture, Wee Willie Winkie table; from top, Humpty Dumpty table; Knuckle tables; E1027 table by Eileen Gray

in the dark (also £412). Both are made to order.

Practicality, unfussy design and more than a nod to the classic lines of the Forties and Fifties are proving a popular combination. Matthew Hilton designed the Presshound table for SCP and it shows every sign of becoming a classic. Made of powder coated steel, it comprises two shelves for books on either side of a magazine slot (£279). It positively invites a large glass of wine to rest on its sturdy surface.

Likewise the Knuckle table from the Manchester-based furniture design company, Ferrius, made of an-

odised aluminium and polyurethane-coated MDF, it is a simple design, but can be made with a top in white, light green, baby blue and orange (with matching knuckle joint at the base) and can be made in any height you fancy (from £390). Soon to appear will be the glass topped Knuckle table with a polished aluminium knuckle joint.

Mobility and style are strong points among the low tables featured in Ruth Aram's Hampstead furnishing and accessory shop. One of the most striking tables is the Battista folding extension table, which looks like the trolley you

might be wheeled off to the operating theatre on, but lower, and has a mechanism which allows it to be used in two positions (£520). The legs are chrome plated steel, the colours a fashionable black, sea blue, curry, fir or plum. There is a matching two-tier folding trolley at £389.

Admittedly, these are all more expensive than the low tables you find in IKEA, but not much more than you would pay for a traditional teak or oak piece. Ruth Aram also stocks the glass table with tubular chrome legs designed by the late Eileen Gray, a self-taught architect and furniture designer. The height

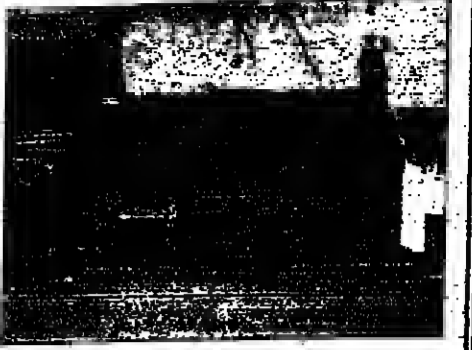
is adjustable, the price £298.

Glass, chrome and brick clay may, however, be a little unforgiving in a household with young children (and sticky fingers). In which case leather is amazingly resilient, wears well and is a fashion survivor. All a good description of The Conran Shop's generously sized tan leather coffee table, £895.

Noel Hennessy Furniture, 6 Cavendish Square, London W1; Chris Lefteri 0181 440 8126; SCP 0171 739 1869; Ferrius 0161 228 6880; Ruth Aram Shop, 65 Heath Street, Hampstead, London NW3

THREE TO VIEW COMMUTER GETAWAYS

MAYTREES is a 17th-century three-bedroom house in Monks Risborough, Buckinghamshire, that has been refurbished and re-decorated in classic National Trust colours. It is also a commuter's dream. Apart from the railway station in the village, there is another Chiltern Line station three-quarters of a mile away at Princes Risborough (annual season ticket to Marylebone, including tube travel, £2,640). The sitting and dining rooms have brick inglenook fireplaces and there is a 19ft family room with a door to the garden. The 18ft 5in kitchen has fitted units, a Smeg hob and oven, an AEG microwave and a Neff dishwasher. Outside there is a rear walled garden, with apple, pear and cherry trees. £285,000 through Lane Fox (01844 342571).



DOVE COTTAGE in North Waltham is five miles from Basingstoke, in Hampshire, with a 45-minute service into Waterloo (annual season ticket with Tube travel, £3,000). The three-bedroom thatched cottage has a 14ft study under the eaves with exposed timbers. Over the past year, the house has been fitted with a new bathroom and has been decorated inside and out. It has an 18ft sitting-room, a dining-room and a kitchen fitted with oak-fronted units. Outside there is parking for two cars, a garden and a summerhouse. Junction 7 of the M3 is two miles away. £190,000 through Lane Fox (01256 474647).



THE MAIT House in Watersfield, West Sussex is two-and-a-half miles from Pulborough, with a 70-minute service into Victoria and London Bridge (annual ticket including Tube, £2,980). When the house was the Black Bear Inn, the present kitchen was the inn, the drawing-room was the mait house, the study was used to stable a donkey. Now a Grade II listed four-bedroom house, it has beamed ceilings, a TV room with vaulted ceiling, and three bathrooms. There is open garaging, a timber-framed outbuilding, a 23ft games room and a swimming-pool. The garden is bordered on two sides by farmland. £290,000 through Guy Leonard & Co (01798 874033).



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